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THE ROMANCE OF SAVOY

VOL. II



ANNE MARIE D'ORLEANS
Fille de Mort, Philippe de France Duc
et de Henriette Stuart, d'Angleterre
à l'Esté Espousée Par Mons^r, le Duc
de S.A.R, le Duc de Savoie, le dix^{me}
foite par Mons^r, le Cardinal de Bouillon
de Versailles, En presence de sa May^{te} de Monseig^r de Mad^e, la Dauphine de M^t et de Mad^e
du Duc de Chartres, Et de Mad^e, sa Socur, des Princes Et princesses du Sang de l'Ambassa^d
de Savoie, Et des Principaux Seig^r, de la Cour, &c



DUCHESSE DE SAVOYE
d'Orleans Frere Unique du Roy
Nacquit le 27, d'Aoust, 1659, et
du Maine, au Nom Et Côté Procureur
d'Aurd 1684, la Ceremonie En à l'Esté
En la Chapelle du Chasteau Royal de
Versailles, En presence de sa May^{te} de Monseig^r de Mad^e, la Dauphine de M^t et de Mad^e
du Duc de Chartres, Et de Mad^e, sa Socur, des Princes Et princesses du Sang de l'Ambassa^d
de Savoie, Et des Principaux Seig^r, de la Cour, &c

*Anna Maria d'Orleans
at the time of her marriage*

THE ROMANCE OF SAVOY

VICTOR AMADEUS II. AND
HIS STUART BRIDE

BY
THE MARCHESA VITELLESCHI

WITH TWENTY-SIX FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS
INCLUDING TWO PHOTOGRAVURE PLATES

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

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THE ROMANCE OF SAVOY

CHAPTER I

THE CONTESSA DI VERRUA

The infatuation of the Duke for the Contessa di Verrua—Her attractions—Inconsistency of her husband's family on the Duke's attentions—d'Arcy corresponds with the King on the subject—Madame di Verrua meets her father at Bourbon—The Abbé di Verrua—The Duke decides to go to Nice—His arrangements that Madame di Verrua should be of the party—Necessary postponement owing to the death of the Queen of Spain—Sinister rumours as to the cause—The voyage to Nice—Prolonged residence of the Court—Scandal relating to Madame di Verrua—She leaves Palazzo Verrua and retires into a convent—The Count refuses a pension—Victor Amadeus provides for her maintenance—The Duchess's demeanour—Her wonderful self-control.

THE Conte and Contessa took up their residence in the Palazzo Verrua, also inhabited by the Dowager Countess and other members of the Verrua family. This palace, one of the oldest and finest in Turin, is now in possession of the Conte Balbo Bertone, a descendant of the Scaglia-Verrua, who occupies the handsome suite of rooms formerly lived in by his fascinating and notorious ancestress. Amongst the interesting collection of portraits in the large salon that of the Contessa, by Mignard, is the first to attract attention ; it was painted at the time

when she was in the height of beauty, and the artist has faithfully portrayed the wit, vivacity, and subtle nature of the woman who proved so irresistible to Victor Amadeus. But few alterations have been made in the apartment since those eventful days ; the dainty boudoir panelled with mirrors and decorated with gilt mouldings leads into the bedroom, from which through the French windows access is obtained to a loggia covered with flowers. On visiting the private precincts inhabited for many years by the fair enchantress, imagination dwells on the scenes of past romance that took place in these rooms, and fantasy draws from the shades of time a vision of mirth and rippling laughter that resounded through these walls.

The presentation of a bride at the Court of Turin was always a matter for curiosity and criticism, and on this occasion greater interest than usual was aroused on the arrival of Mademoiselle de Luynes ; reports of the young girl's beauty had prepared the way for the admiration of the generous, and the disparagement of less liberal-minded rivals.

It was not the Contessa's beauty only but the immense fascination of her winning ways that attracted general attention, the charm of which was still more increased by the occasional shades of deep reflection lurking in her expressive eyes that momentarily overcast the buoyant joyousness of her nature and revealed a depth of thought beyond her years.

Brought up in great simplicity at her father's



From a portrait by Mignard

By kind permission of Conte Balbo Bertone

THE CONTESSA DI VERRUA

home, her childhood had been passed with her brothers and sisters, who were sufficiently numerous to suffice for their own amusements ; consequently she was entirely ignorant on the etiquettes necessitated by life at Court, and received severe reprimands from her mother-in-law on the small importance she attached to the curtsies, compliments, and various codes of Court ceremonies to be observed in the presence of the Duke.

The preference she showed for the sole companionship of her husband, with whom she was then very much in love, and her avoidance of society, brought on her renewed reproaches on the part of the old Contessa ; and before long she was forced to recognise that her love of isolation and home life with her husband were both alike impossible. Her mother-in-law was an ambitious and exacting woman, and left the young Contessa no peace till she had compelled her to occupy the position at Court that was hers both by birth and as wife of the Conte di Verrua. The Count, though much attached to his young wife, had no strength of character, and offered little opposition to his mother's meddlesome interference, so at the age of fourteen the Countess took her place as one of the fairest amidst the galaxy of beauties at the Court of Victor Amadeus. She now had full scope for showing her wit and brilliant powers of conversation. Drawn into the frivolous atmosphere of the Court she quickly drifted into the ways and habits habitual to that life, and encouraged by the

pleasant flatteries that approved all she did, the childish simplicity was soon replaced by coquettish smiles, and glances of response lit up the expressive eyes on the openly expressed admiration of the courtiers.

Such was the young Countess in 1684, the year of the Duke's marriage with Anna d'Orléans. When the engagement was announced the Countess shared in the general interest and excitement felt by everyone on such an important event, and to her, the approaching arrival of the Duchess appealed individually more than to others. Anna d'Orléans was a Frenchwoman like herself; she was also a young bride of nearly the same age, and as the Countess would have the privilege of being constantly thrown in her company, she anticipated hours of pleasant intimacy with the Duchess that would lessen the loneliness which was still a subject for her mother-in-law's reproaches, the tedium of which were not effaced even by her new life at Court.

Strange to say, till 1688 Victor Amadeus seems to have lived entirely unconscious of the Contessa's exceptional charms. This, save that she was a mere child when she arrived at Turin, was all the more surprising as she was constantly before his eyes, and whatever she did was the theme for general discussion. The causes for this total oblivion of so attractive a woman must be chiefly accounted for by the Duke's wonderful faculty for deep absorption in the one matter, whatever it might be, in which he was engrossed.

One way and another, France had kept him perpetually employed, and beyond trifling attentions hurriedly shown to any chance lady, no stray or idle thoughts were allowed seriously to distract a mind already harassed by the incessant annoyances caused by a country that had purposely established this system towards Savoy, with the premeditated intention of retarding the expansion of a State, a tendency to which France had always foreseen with fear and apprehension.

Had Louis XIV. not exasperated Victor Amadeus into abandoning his studious and less agitating pursuits, there would have been no reason that he would have noticed the Countess more now than four years previously ; but having laid himself out for a life of dissipation, he had leisure to look round, and accidentally his glance was arrested by the French bride. That one glance met hers : the veil fell from his eyes, and as heart responded to heart, Victor Amadeus marvelled that he should have neglected to pluck this fair flower, that had bloomed so long in his garden.

Most of the accounts relating to this memorable epoch of the Duke's life and his infatuation for the Contessa di Verrua are founded on the documents preserved in the Ministère des Affaires étrangères. The official letters that passed between Louis XIV. and his Ambassador at Turin are so replete with details that in reproducing some of the correspondence written during the time that the Countess swayed the Duke's destiny, a clearer light is thrown on the

situation than from any narrative published on the subject.

It was on January 17th that d'Arcy first mentioned the lady's name who was to play such an important part in the Duke's domestic and public affairs, and he despatched the following letter to the Court of Versailles :—

“Last Wednesday when I went to Moncalieri to pay my respects to the Duke of Savoy I heard that he had joined the ladies in a sledging party; he first took a turn with the Duchess in the plain of Mirafiore, and afterwards with the other ladies. For the last fifteen days, whenever there has been a heavy fall of snow, he has sledged with the ladies and gentlemen, and ever since the first day, when he drove Madame de Chaumont, he has always driven Madame de Verrue, a daughter of the Duc de Luynes, of about seventeen or eighteen years of age, beautiful and very modest.”¹

Nothing in this account of a sledging party on a winter's afternoon could be construed to denote that it was a prologue to a liaison destined to become the topic of the day, and beyond his usual curiosity in the affairs relating to the Court of Turin, the King in the following reply did not seem to attach undue importance to his Ambassador's observation.

“MARLY, 29th *January*, 1688.

“Continue to inform me on everything you can learn regarding the Duke of Savoy and his amuse-

¹ Ministère des Affaires étrangères. Paris. Corres. Savoie. Turin, 1687-8.

ments. I shall like also to know in which direction lie his preferences for those at his Court, and who merit it the most.”¹

The next letter from d’Arcy bears more directly on the relations existing between the Duke and the Duchess : the King and his brother were still anxious on the question of the Duchess receiving the consideration due to her, and wished to know the Ambassador’s opinion if he could report any improvement in the Duke’s conduct towards his wife. To this inquiry d’Arcy replied as follows :—

“ 1st February, 1688. TURIN.

“ I sent for M. de Marigny, equerry to the Duchess of Savoy, who by his good sense, piety and the confidential position he holds with the Princess and the Prince her husband could best inform me on the matter. I have been able to understand that any displeasure the Duchess might feel towards the Duke arises from his bad temper, from the effects of which she suffers now and again ; but on this point as well as on others, the virtue and sweet nature of this Princess have enabled her to obtain control over the Prince, and no danger need be feared that there will either be a rupture, or that anything serious will ever occur to separate them. It has been stated lately that the Duchess of Savoy is in an interesting state.”²

This report was viewed with favour at the Court of Versailles ; Louis XIV. felt satisfaction that the Duke

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

should have seen the advisability of attending to his admonition, and he expressed his gratification to the Ambassador in the following words :—

“MARLY, 19th February, 1688.

“I am very glad to see that the Duke of Savoy is beginning to give the Duchess my niece greater marks of affection and consideration since the observations you addressed to the Prince, and those I also made to M. Dogliani his Ambassador. I wish you to continue to inform me of the Duke’s conduct towards both Princesses, so that I may have a clear notion of the position.”¹

This last communication from the King, who thus expressed his approbation of the favourable results he credited himself of having obtained with the Duke, had crossed with the following letter from his Ambassador, on reading which Louis XIV. was less well pleased in noting that Madame di Verrua’s name supplied the principal theme.

“14th February, 1688. TURIN.

“Your Majesty having given me orders to keep him informed regarding the Duke of Savoy’s employments and amusements, I must tell him that since the Duke took young Madame de Verrue out sledging it appears to me that his attentions and assiduities towards her not only continue but are more marked. Not a day passes at the Opera but he is seen in this lady’s box, where they attract everyone’s attention by

¹ *Ibid.*

their loud laughter. At the same time, the lady's youth and high spirits lead me to believe that, on her side at any rate, there is nothing serious, and as yet one cannot notice any understanding between them to give rise to suspicions of intimacy."¹

Whilst the Duke took no pains to hide his increasing admiration for the Countess, and invented any pretext that might afford him an opportunity of being in her society, she began to find that the position she occupied of Court favourite had many drawbacks that detracted from unmitigated satisfaction on the honour conferred on her. Prying eyes, whose sole occupation is to peer into the affairs of others, did not lose this chance to make their observations, and, driven by jealousy, many rivals could not hide their vexation that a Frenchwoman should have been singled out for the Duke's unusual attentions.

D'Arcy was quite accurate in his surmise that up to the time of his last despatch no umbrage could be taken on the existing relations between the Duke and the Countess. More serious sentiments had not yet superseded the feeling of good comradeship that seemed to be their link in common.

The Duke had never felt at his ease with the Duchess, for though Victor Amadeus was well aware of his wife's superiority, and valued her admirably calm and sweet nature, the more he admitted to himself her merits the more he learnt to look on her as

¹ *Ibid.*

a Madonna, to be put on a pedestal, and only to be worshipped from afar. At this moment he was being carried away by his naturally high spirits, less easily suppressed owing to the sedentary life he had imposed on himself, and the few opportunities he had ever had for any pleasure.

The striking contrast between the amiable, quiet Duchess and the bright, coquettish Countess who amused him with her merry prattle and attracted him by her smart witticisms, was too great not to act as detrimental to his wife's influence.

Fascinated by this new element of interest that had entered into his life, Victor Amadeus, who first connected Madame di Verrua in his mind merely as a playfellow and the soul of all the entertainments, began to neglect his usual caution, and it was not until serious consequences had ensued did he awaken to the fact that he had been playing with fire.

The Verrua family, who, in the early days of the Count's marriage, much against the young Countess's wish, had insisted on her being *en évidence* at Court, began now to express their disapproval on the rumours relating to the attentions the Duke was paying her. The person who played the leading part in that family was the Abbé di Verrua, the Count's uncle. From the position he had formerly occupied as the Savoy Ambassador in France, and subsequently as Minister of State at Turin, he was looked up to by the rest of the family, and had acquired the status of

general adviser. By no means an exemplary character, the Abbé was totally lacking in all principles, and justified any ends by which he might attain his means. His relations considered that he was a man it were best to treat with deference and respect, and guided by awe rather than by affection, they never omitted to consult him in matters of family crisis.

On this occasion the Abbé thought fit to join the Dowager Countess in remonstrating with his niece. He drew her attention to the harm she was doing to herself, and the discredit she would bring on her own name and that of her husband did she not discourage the Duke's indiscreet marks of admiration, and prevent any further gossip on the intimacy existing between them.

Madame di Verrua listened respectfully to these reproofs, but while willing to admit that there might have been some indiscretion on her part, she loudly protested against the injustice of any attack on her innocence. She expressed regret for the admonishments, and in order to show how painful to her were these accusations, she mentioned her wish to leave Turin for a short time and to retire to the country. With extraordinary inconsistency a general outcry was raised at Madame di Verrua's wise intentions: the Abbé and her mother-in-law repudiated any need for such a decision, and even her husband joined in the chorus to prove to her that such a step would show great presumption on her part, and by giving so

much importance to a matter that it rested with her to bring to an end, would only attract still further attention.¹

Madame di Verrua was at first somewhat discouraged that her attempts of self-defence should be thus authoritatively negatived, but before long found that her habitual life at Court, to which she had been forced to return, was preferable to existence in the Palazzo Verrua, where she was invariably confronted by cold looks and harsh words.

In consequence of her decision to remain at Court, the family now regretted having encouraged her to do so, and made efforts to induce the Count to join in upbraiding his wife on her foolish conduct ; but though he showed some concern that her name should be mentioned slightly, he was far more worried at the disturbed state of the home life, and entirely disapproved of his mother's constant reference to the matter, and the pleasure she seemed to take in exciting everyone against her daughter-in-law.

On the other hand, the Count knew by experience that to urge his opinions or desires in opposition to those decided on by his mother was simply lost time. He had been brought up to accept her authority without questioning, and was of too weak and indolent a nature to care to enter into these disputes ; he consequently adopted the strange course of leaving things to settle themselves, and asked the Duke's permission

¹ *La Comtesse de Verrue*, p. 39, G. de Lérís.

to absent himself from Turin in order to join Hungary in the war against the Turks.¹

This action on the part of the Conte di Verrua created great surprise and no little talk. Many interpretations were suggested as to the reasons that prompted him to desert his wife and his two children in a moment of need. It was not to be expected that Victor Amadeus would be the one to offer opposition to a plan that simplified the opportunities for obtaining interviews with Madame di Verrua, and a letter from d'Arcy, on May 22nd, draws attention that this point of view was adopted by the Duke on the Count's departure. The Ambassador wrote to the King as follows:—

“It is remarked that since the Conte di Verrua has left, the Duke of Savoy has recommenced to pay great attentions to his wife; one cannot yet say how far they will go or with what success they will be met. Up to the present, if the lady has shown more carelessness than reflection, still she has lived quite circumspectly.”

A few days later d'Arcy further noticed that “M. the Duke of Savoy appears always more enslaved by the young Madame di Verrua.”²

No one more than the Countess herself had reason to lament her husband's absence. The situation in which she was placed seemed hopeless—at Court she

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

² Ministère des Affaires étrangères. D'Arcy au Roi. Corres. Savoie.

was an object for distrust and jealousy, and at home she had to smart under her mother-in-law's incessant reproofs. The Dowager Countess, fearing some disagreeable inquiries from the de Luynes family, had taken the initiative to write to all the nearest connections in Paris, giving her version of the intimacy existing between the Duke and the young Countess, which she represented herself as having done her best to discountenance. The old Abbé also thought it wiser to protect himself, and knowing that d'Arcy transmitted to Louis XIV. all the information he could obtain referring to the Duke and his Court, went every now and then to the Ambassador, and under the semblance of a confidence, recounted his fears and regret at the unfortunate infatuation of the Duke for his niece ; at the same time he always laid stress on all the means employed by himself and the Verrua family to bring it to an end. The Ambassador listened to these confidences with an air of apparent indifference, but every word was, as intended by the Abbé, reported to Louis XIV. in the next despatch.¹

In the month of June Victor Amadeus was camping out at Saluzzo, and it was expected that this interruption to the daily round of Court functions might also make a slight break in the familiarity between the Duke and the Countess. Such, however, was not the case ; his attachment for her was too deeply rooted to be influenced by the short

¹ *La Comtesse de Verrue*, p. 42.

distance that did not prevent him from being, if not daily, still in constant communication with her; d'Arcy refers to this in the following letter :—

“26th June, 1688.

“FROM THE CAMP OF SALUZZO.

“Last Monday, after dinner, the Duke of Savoy left here in the afternoon to go to Turin. I have heard from the Comte de Mayen, who accompanied him, it was reported by the Captain of his body-guard that soon after his arrival the Duke went to the promenade, where Madame de Verrue failed to appear, but towards evening the Prince was no longer seen, and it is supposed that he went to find her elsewhere. It is said that both the Duke and the Countess have been much troubled at the contents of a letter she has received from her family concerning the attentions shown her by the Prince.”¹

Madame di Verrua realised more and more that her position at Turin was becoming unbearable. All her efforts to obliterate herself seemed unavailing. When she absented herself from Court, it was at once whispered that meetings with the Duke were taking place in private, if she assisted at the Court entertainments she knew that every movement was observed, and exaggerated statements were spread on the attentions paid her by Victor Amadeus. At last, heartily weary of the inconsistent behaviour of the Verrua family, and unable to submit to the tone of reprobation

¹ Ministère des Affaires étrangères. Corres. Savoie. d'Arcy au Roi.

tion they adopted with her, the Countess pleaded illness, and said it was absolutely necessary for her health to leave Turin, and announced her decision of joining her father at the watering-place of Bourbon.

This decision caused some dismay to the Dowager Countess. She had qualms of conscience that she had not done all that might have been expected of her to save her daughter-in-law from her precarious position, and she feared that when the Duc de Luynes heard the true version from Madame di Verrua, that both the Abbé and herself would incur a large share of the blame from which they had taken such pains to exonerate themselves. Madame di Verrua, however, would listen to no expostulations against a decision on which she was determined, and her mother-in-law had to content herself with imposing the condition that her journey should not be undertaken alone in her husband's absence, and that the duty of accompanying her devolved on the Abbé.

Madame di Verrua would willingly have dispensed with the Abbé's services as travelling companion, but on this point the Dowager Countess was as inexorable as she herself had been on the question of going; the old Countess felt it was essential that one of the family should be present at the meeting between the Duc de Luynes and his daughter, and no one would be more suitable than the Abbé to counteract any biassed statements made by Madame di Verrua to her father.

On arriving at Bourbon the meeting between the

Duke and his daughter was most distressing, and with tears in his eyes he listened to her tale of the life she had led since her marriage, of the callous indifference shown her by her mother-in-law, and of all the humiliations to which she had been forced to submit. After trying to console her, her father strongly recommended the course proposed by Madame di Verrua herself, namely, a long absence from Italy ; he also suggested that her husband should come to France and establish himself there, and she would be assured of the protection and help denied her at Turin.¹

The Duc de Luynes never doubted the approval of the Verrua family on an arrangement by which they would be relieved from all the responsibility or Madame di Verrua's position ; he therefore exposed his plan to the Abbé and expressed the wish that his daughter should return with him to Paris, where she would remain until her husband joined her.

Point by point the Abbé strongly opposed the Duke's suggestion, and with convincing arguments proved it would be a most unwise step. He said that the Count would never obtain a second authorisation of absence from the Duke of Savoy, and earnestly begged the Duc de Luynes to consider that Madame di Verrua's future position would be greatly prejudiced should she not return to her husband's home. The Abbé himself guaranteed to protect his niece from any further annoyances that might arise

¹ *La Comtesse de Verrue*, p. 51.

from the compromising attentions of the Duke of Savoy, and also promised that her home life would be made happier for her, and she should be saved from her mother-in-law's recriminations.

The Abbé appeared so sincere in the sentiments he avowed for Madame di Verrua and was plausible enough in his protestations of acting solely for her good, that the Duc de Luynes, who at first had entertained no doubts as to the proper course to pursue, began to hesitate, and with very little more persuasion on the part of the Abbé was soon convinced that he was right in urging her to return to Turin, and left Bourbon quite reassured that his daughter was in safe hands and that his anxieties as a father had needlessly exaggerated his fears.

No sooner had the Duc de Luynes left, than the Abbé lifted his mask and disclosed the vile motives that had prompted his insistence that Madame di Verrua should return with him. As she heard from his lips ardent protestations of his admiration and love she trembled ; and with horror defended herself against any advance from a man she had always viewed with distrust, and who now inspired her detestation.

In unequivocal terms she heaped such opprobrium on his head that the old Abbé, quivering with rage at the repulse of his suit, from that moment became her enemy, and brought Madame di Verrua into further discredit with her husband's relations by accusing her of having made false statements to her father relating

to their mode of treatment towards her. The injustice of these accusations produced by the Abbé's mean spirit of revenge rendered the prolonged dissensions with the family the more unendurable, increased the difficulties of her position, and threw the Countess into a state of such profound discouragement that from now she seemed to lose whatever self-respect had hitherto influenced her determination not to accede to the Duke's demands. This moment was generally supposed to be the turning-point in her life, and what had been up to then premature ill-natured gossip was now an accomplished fact. This opinion is almost conclusively corroborated by d'Arcy in the following words :—

“Last Wednesday Madame de Verrue was for the first time at the Opera in a dimly lit box above that of the Duchess of Savoy ; the Duke was always with her, save for a few moments that he left her to go to the other boxes in order to avoid attracting too much attention to his attachment to Madame de Verrue. Her husband the Count and her uncle the Abbé, who were in one of my boxes, appeared interested in watching the Duke's movements, though since the Count's return from Hungary I cannot gather that the undeniable love of the Prince for Madame di Verrua has caused either disapproval or trouble in the Count's house.”¹

This letter was written by d'Arcy towards the end of January, 1689. The Count had returned from

¹ Ministère des Affaires étrangères. d'Arcy au Roi.

Hungary a short time previously, and judging from the Ambassador's remarks on the manners he adopted towards his wife, the Count appears to have been guided by his natural indifference, or if not, to have controlled in a wonderful way whatever feelings of indignation he ought to have felt against his wife and the Duke. The following notification relating to the Count's return had been written by the Ambassador to Louis XIV. :—

“TURIN, 27th November, 1688.

“The young Comte de Verrue returned from Hungary six days ago. There is nothing to show that his arrival has caused any trouble or change in his home ; it may be that he is still ignorant of what is generally suspected as to his wife's relations with the Duke of Savoy, or perhaps he wisely appears to know nothing on an equivocal situation. The lady remained absent from Court for three days, apparently on account of her husband's return, but the following day I saw her with the Duke in the reception room of Madame Royale. It is said that her confinement is shortly to be expected.”¹

The first indications that there would be a limit even to the Count's placid endurance of his wife's infidelities was given later in the spring on the occasion of the Duke's announcement that he was going to start for his annual voyage to Nice, and intended that the Duchess and twelve Court ladies should accompany him. Victor Amadeus had always

¹ *Ibid.* Corres. Savoie. d'Arcy au Roi.

been in the habit of going to Nice alone, as his visit there was purely official : there was no mistaking the motive that dictated his wish to be accompanied by the Duchess, and it was a foregone conclusion, even before Madame di Verrua's name was mentioned, that she would be one of the twelve ladies. The Conte di Verrua, in his official position, should by rights have formed one of the Duke's suite, and it was not without considerable annoyance that Victor Amadeus, when all arrangements for starting were concluded, was told that, owing to an attack of fever, the Count would be unable to accompany the Court. This sudden indisposition seemed likely to imperil the whole plan mapped out by the Duke, for it was not possible for the Countess deliberately to leave Turin whilst her husband was confined to bed. Victor Amadeus was at a loss what to do till he adopted the idea of claiming the Duchess's aid, and she, apparently unsuspecting the real cause of her husband's anxiety lest the projected visit to Nice should fail, agreed to ask the Contessa di Verrua to keep her engagement, and pointed out to her that as the first day the Court did not intend going farther than Moncalieri, which was so near Turin, should her husband's indisposition continue, she could easily return home.¹

Just at the time that the Duchess was thus innocently made her husband's accomplice against her own interests, the sad news of the death of the

¹ *Ibid.* Corres. Savoie. d'Arcy au Roi.

Queen of Spain swept all other thoughts from the Duchess's mind. Though the sisters had not met since the day that Marie Louise was forced into a marriage with Charles II., their lives were as intimately united as if they had never parted. In their uninterrupted correspondence every detail of their daily existence, every thought was communicated from one to the other.

The sad impression caused by the Queen's death was intensified by the general belief that, like her mother, Henrietta of Orléans, Marie Louise was a victim to poison. The suggestion for this nefarious act was supposed to have emanated from the Court of Vienna, where the undisputed influence of the Queen of Spain over her weak husband was viewed with alarm. The Emperor of Austria, in contemplation of an approaching war with Louis XIV., felt the necessity to be able to count infallibly on the King of Spain as an ally, but he saw that those hopes were being neutralised by the Queen's attachment to French interests. Rumour further stated that Count Mansfeld, the Emperor's Ambassador at Madrid, was credited with having employed for this purpose the services of the notorious Comtesse de Soissons, the mother of Prince Eugène, who, as previously related, had been banished from Paris for similar sinister reasons. As far as can be gathered from the many contradictory reports of these tragical circumstances, it seems that the Comtesse handed the Queen a glass of milk into which she had previously

inserted poison, in the house of Count Mansfeld. Marie Louise died in great agonies a few hours after having taken the milk. Following her mother's example of fortitude and Christianity, words of pardon to those who had sacrificed her life were the last that passed the Queen's lips.¹

This tragical death of the beloved Marie Louise filled everyone with horror, and the Duchess was overwhelmed with grief at her irreparable loss. She felt how inopportune would be a State journey to Nice at this moment, and endeavoured to deter the Duke from carrying out his original design, and pressed him either to postpone the visit altogether or suggested that he should go there alone, as in former years.

But Victor Amadeus, who had combined this state visit for the sole purpose of enjoying Madame di Verrua's company free of restraint, had no intention of complying with either one or the other of the Duchess's suggestions; all preparations had been made, he was anxious to start, and beyond ordering a Court mourning and putting off the visit for a few days, he refused to consider any other proposal.

The Duke's mind being thus made up as to his determination to carry out his intended journey, the Court, attended by a numerous suite and a large bodyguard, started for Nice; the whole of the route was lined with troops. From each town he passed on

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 115, L. Saredo.

the way, the Duke, according to custom, claimed a thousand livres, and a similar offer he expected from the town of Nice. This was a wise precaution, as the Duke's expenses were so great on this journey that d'Arcy said he must have spent over 600 pistoles a day, a large sum for a Prince whose avarice was proverbial.

On arriving at Nice, the Duke and Duchess made a solemn entry into the town on horseback, surrounded by their staff; they were enthusiastically acclaimed by the people and the nobility, who advanced to pay homage and to kiss their hands.

When formerly at Nice, as soon as Victor Amadeus had attended to all the business connected with his visit, he would return immediately to Turin; but on this occasion there seemed to be always a reason to necessitate a delay. That the Court was not to return for some time was shown by a rapid excursion of the Duke to Turin to attend to affairs that claimed his presence in his capital; but as soon as that had been done he quickly returned to Nice; and the month of May passed, but still no orders were given for a move homewards.

Meanwhile the Conte di Verrua found it incompatible with the position he held at Court to allege further pretexts for his remissness in his official duties, and joined the Court at Nice; but he there found a state of affairs regarding his wife impossible for him to countenance, and soon took his departure, "being," as d'Arcy remarked, "apparently disgusted at his

wife's conduct, which, if not absolutely criminal, is, to say the least of it, very bad and imprudent."¹

When the Court at length returned to Turin in August, Madame di Verrua afforded the general topic for conversation. Finding her position there untenable, she abandoned the Palazzo Verrua, and entered a convent attended by one of her maids. Once having taken this bold step, she shut herself up entirely, and heedless of the remonstrances and supplications of the Verrua family, who implored her to avoid a scandal, absolutely refused admission to all her husband's connections. On being told that the Count had asked the Duke's permission to leave Turin and to establish himself in France, Madame di Verrua claimed as due to her from her husband a pension of 15,000 livres and a furnished house. The Count, however, seemed ill disposed to comply with his wife's wish, and after a long delay he replied that the marriage having taken place in France, it was in that country only that any point of law could be decided. He therefore refused to enter into any arrangement till he had ascertained her rights to the claim.

The Count's indifference as to his wife's financial concerns placed her in a predicament all the more awkward, as by the rules of the convent she could only reside there for one month, and for some days it seemed problematic as to which was to be her future retreat. It required a special favour on the part of the Pope, who was appealed to by Victor Amadeus, to

¹ *Ibid.* Corres. Savoie. d'Arcy au Roi.

extend the permission of Madame di Verrua's residence in the Convent of the Visitation for as long as it should be necessary to enable her to arrange a small house for her use, situated in the convent garden, where she would equally be under the protection of the Sisters, but better lodged than in the convent itself.¹

As time passed and the Count remained impassive on the subject of providing for his wife, the Duke showed great annoyance that all the responsibilities of the Countess's position should fall on his shoulders, and in a very bad temper he sent for the Abbé di Verrua to inform him that if his nephew did not carry out his duties as a husband, and settle a sufficient pension on the Countess, he would cancel the permission he had accorded him to reside in France, and should he still persist in going there against the Duke's consent, he could never re-enter Piedmont, and his property would be confiscated.²

All these threats and protestations did not, however, advance the payment of Madame di Verrua's pension ; and as September and October passed and no means were provided for her maintenance, it devolved on Victor Amadeus to settle on her a life annuity of 12,000 livres. In order to do this he had to borrow a large sum on the town of Turin.

With all this publicity attached to Madame di Verrua's name, it seems incredible to believe what is

¹ *La Comtesse de Verrue*, p. 82. G. de Lérès.

² *Ibid.*, p. 84.

generally asserted by most of her biographers, that till these last episodes, when the state of her health left no room for doubt, the Duchess should have remained ignorant of the Duke's passionate attachment for the Countess. One would be more disposed to believe that the Duchess had been only too well aware for some time past that she had been robbed of her husband's love ; but her attachment for him was so true and her loyalty so sincere that she recoiled at the thoughts of uttering a single word implying reproach. She concealed her feelings, so as to give credence to this belief of her ignorance. At all events, it was from Victor Amadeus himself that she heard the unvarnished truth, which excluded all hope she may have had as to exaggeration on the state of affairs.

No doubt his relations with Madame di Verrua had assumed a far more serious aspect than the Duke himself had ever contemplated ; but such being the case, disagreeable though it might be, he deemed it better to take the Duchess into his confidence ; and we learn by d'Arcy the curious means adopted by Victor Amadeus for enlightening the Duchess on a situation that he felt had become very awkward.

“It has been noticed that the Duke of Savoy has of late contracted the habit of walking about the rooms of his palace with the Duchess every morning in his dressing-gown as if to conciliate her, and the morning after Madame di Verrua had entered the convent, the Prince, as if quite astonished himself,

turned to the Duchess, and said, ‘ Well, Madam, what do you think of this extraordinary resolve of Madame di Verrua, who, as report says, has entered the Convent of the Sisters of Mary ? Surely you will agree with me that she merits some interest should be shown her ? ’ The only reply the Duchess made was to bend her head and drop her eyelids.”¹

Amidst these episodes of prolonged and unusual emotion, 1689 was brought to a close and 1690 opened under auspices which, if less sensational, none the less marked an epoch in the destinies of the House of Savoy.

¹ Corres. Savoie. d’Arcy au Roi.

CHAPTER II

THE CALL TO ARMS

The birth of the Prince of Wales—Reception of the news in Turin—The consequences of the flight of James II.—The Emperor of Austria enlists the services of Savoy—Assistance is promised to the Duke—His hesitations to join the League—He finally conforms to the conditions—He declares his intentions to his Ministers—The popularity of his resolve—The removal of the Duchess to Vercelli—The Battle of Staffarda—Further reverses of the allied troops—Discontent at Turin—The Contessa di Verrua tries to console the Duke—Her influence over him—Her appointment at Court—The recommencement of hostilities—Renewed success of the enemy—The death of Louvois.

ON June 10th, 1688, an event took place which aroused a considerable amount of interest, not only in England, but in other countries as well, and particularly in Savoy.

On that day the Prince of Wales was born, and far-seeing politicians judged that his birth might lead to unexpected issues in European politics, and whilst adversaries of the House of Stuart accepted the news of the advent of an heir to the throne with moody hostility, it instilled fresh courage in the decaying hopes of faithful adherents of the Stuart Princes. Their loyal followers gladly welcomed an event that they argued optimistically might stem the tide of discontent so strongly manifested in England under

the mistaken government of James II., and promised to lead to the greater stability of a House that was shorn so sadly of its prestige.

The most extraordinary enthusiasm prevailed in Turin on reception of this news; the whole town shared in the general feeling of delight, a feeling due as much to the cordiality that had always reigned between the princely Houses of Savoy and of Stuart, as to the wish to be associated on such an occasion with the Duchess, whose attachment for her Stuart relations was well known. By her engaging manners and kind disposition she had won the hearts of the people, and they in return for her graciousness supported her by their sympathy in all events that affected either her joys or sorrows.

Misson, who was in Turin at the time, enlarges on the manifest joy of all classes when the news was made public, and states :—

“ The popular belief is, that this child is a present from Heaven and a gift from the Holy Virgin of Loreto, of whom the King and Queen had asked unceasingly for a son. The Jesuits also, who are highly favoured by the Queen of Paradise, and whose prayers are generally heard, had also prayed fervently that this grace might be granted. Previous to the Queen’s confinement wagers were laid of ten, twenty, and thirty to one, that Her Majesty would be delivered of a boy; it will hardly be believed that there were some people sufficiently incredulous to accept these wagers, therefore many made considerable sums

of money. It is easy to picture the joy and triumph of those who had never had any doubts as to the birth of a son when their certitude was confirmed.”¹

These popular sentiments expressive of his people's sympathies in his concerns were held by Victor Amadeus to be quite as important as the event that had led to their display. A crisis in his relations with France was drawing very near, and he knew that the success of his cause depended in great measure on his having the hearts of his people. Animated by these favourable prognostics, the Duke's letter of felicitations to James II. was more than usually cordial, and in due course he received the following official reply from the King :—

“MY BROTHER AND NEPHEW,—Count Rovero, your gentleman in waiting, has handed me the letter you have written me on the birth of my son the Prince of Wales, and he further expressed, according to your orders, the part you take in this grace granted me by Heaven. I thereby see how greatly you interest yourself in what concerns me. I shall always bear in mind the sentiments due to you, and with sincere friendship and affection,

“My brother and nephew,

“Your very faithful brother and uncle,

“JAMES R.

“WHITEHALL, 13th November, 1688.

“To the Duke of Savoy.”²

¹ *Voyage en Italie*, vol. iii. p. 69. Misson.

² State Archives. Turin.

As is well known, the hopeful sentiments cherished by the King's followers were roughly dispelled by the flight of James II. in the winter of that year and the arrival in England of William of Orange. This involved a sudden change in politics, and gave Victor Amadeus serious cause for reflection. To achieve a rupture with France under the best possible conditions seemed more feasible under this new aspect of affairs ; but while he was hesitating as to the best course to pursue in his policy towards England, William of Orange clearly saw what an advantage it would be to him were he to gain the accession of Savoy to the Grand Alliance and put an end to the Duke's indecisions by inviting his adherence to the call, and pressed for a response.

In the adoption of this view, William of Orange had the entire goodwill of the Emperor Leopold, who thought the moment had arrived when negotiations might be put on foot that would prove beneficial to all the countries, Savoy included, desiring to arm against France.

No one seemed better suited than Prince Eugène for the Emperor's purpose, and Zinzendorf, the Minister of State, participated the Emperor's wishes that Savoy should be enlisted in the League. When Prince Eugène was informed that he was requested to proceed to Turin to interview his cousin, he demurred at the mission imposed on him. Though he had seen the Duke but rarely, the Prince had intuitively gauged the irresponsible nature of Victor

Amadeus, and he foresaw that in the event of the Austrian Government finding itself involved in difficulties with Savoy, it might also lead to consequences disagreeable to himself.

In replying to the Minister, Prince Eugène made no secret of his unwillingness to comply with the Emperor's desire. Amongst other reasons he urged against the choice falling on him, he stated that the influence he was considered to exercise over the Duke of Savoy was greatly overrated, that he only corresponded with his cousin once or twice a year on matters of pure formality, and he had absolutely no intimacy with the Court of Savoy. Prince Eugène further mentioned that from what he had been told in Paris, the Duke's sincerity was held in little esteem, still less his friendship. He had the reputation of pushing dissimulation to an extreme, consequently he never could be trusted to say what he really thought. For these reasons the Prince represented to the Minister that one person was as good as another to negotiate with his cousin, who, as long as Austria was not sparing of her promises, would have the young Duke's body, soul, and State at her service.¹

These revelations of the Duke's character given in such explicit terms only confirmed the Emperor's decision that Prince Eugène would be by far the most competent envoy to come to an understanding with such a shifty person as he represented Victor

¹ Carutti, p. 100.

Amadeus to be. So much pressure was brought to bear on the Prince that he found it impossible to raise further objections, and, accompanied by the Abbé Grimani, he went to Turin secretly, in August, 1689. The meeting between the cousins was to all appearances most friendly, and the difficulties the Prince had laid before the Emperor against his suitability for the negotiations did not at all respond to his apprehensions.

The proposals on the part of Austria were expounded to the Duke; the principal points comprised the restitution to Savoy of Pinerolo and the liberation of Casal. Promises were made that England would assist with a large sum of money, and Austria and Spain with troops. The Abbé Grimani further said that the King of Spain had given orders to Fuensalida, the Governor of Milan, to supply Victor Amadeus with troops should he desire them, and he was strongly urged by Austria to throw in his lot with the other countries forming the confederation.¹

The Duke listened attentively, and spent some time in considering carefully how he could conciliate the advantageous offer made by Austria, and yet not compromise himself with France till he could be sure of the sincerity of the Emperor's proposals. The naturally suspicious nature of Victor Amadeus, added to the mistrust engendered by the past years' "espionage" inflicted by France, had led to his absolute incapacity of attaching honest motives to anyone.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

His lack of straightforwardness corroborated Prince Eugène's observant reflections on his cousin, and he was not deceived by the Duke's reply, who, while he expressed satisfaction at the terms proposed by the Emperor, said, that as war had not yet been declared between Austria and France, he considered it would be premature to draw up an official treaty of conditions, it would be advisable he should content himself for the moment with establishing a friendly understanding with Austria to guard against future contingencies.

Though the Duke wished to temporise before binding himself to compromising conclusions that might prematurely precipitate a rupture with France, the declaration of war made by Louis XIV. against Holland, and the prevalent belief that success would attend William of Orange, drew the Duke's attention to the necessity of enlisting the recently crowned King's sympathy in the concerns of Savoy, and added weight to his future decisions.

The letter Victor Amadeus addressed to the King on his elevation to the throne of England was needlessly warm in its protestations of the Duke's admiration for William's eminent qualities and merits. Appearing to forget the means employed by William III. to obtain the throne, in flattering terms he stated that His Majesty had been chosen by Providence as one of the most powerful means to quench the violence being wrought by neighbouring countries, and he concluded by praying for his

generous protection and for the honour of his good favour.¹

Great as had been the precautions taken by the Duke to ensure secrecy during this hour of crisis, and in spite of the mystifications he employed to hide his real designs, it was unavoidable that Louis XIV. should obtain a tolerably fair knowledge of the Duke's expected adherence to the League, and an intercepted letter from Victor Amadeus to the Elector of Bavaria, in which he said he felt sure he could keep Catinat employed long enough to give time for the troops promised by the League to arrive, lent invaluable aid to elucidating the Duke's intentions.

Though Victor Amadeus still halted on the threshold of adhering to the League, on the 8th February, 1690, two Imperial decrees were issued, the first of which gave to the Ambassador of the Court of Turin at Vienna the rights accorded to crowned heads, and the other agreed to the Duke's purchase of the feudal cities on which he had for so many years set his heart. In return for this concession the Duke agreed to pay a million lira for the Emperor's use in the war against the Turks.²

When this agreement between the Emperor and Victor Amadeus came to the King's ears, he considered it tantamount to the coalition of Savoy to the League, and without a moment's hesitation

¹ Archives des Affaires étrangères. Corres. Savoie.

² Carutti, p. 102.

Louis XIV. determined, if possible, to take the Duke at a disadvantage.

With everything pointing to an early opening of hostilities, Louis XIV. had already turned Madame Royale's secret sympathy for France to some account, and had begged her to inform him in confidence of how many troops Savoy could dispose, and requested her also to supply him with a correct estimate of her finances. Madame Royale experienced no feeling of indignation that her friendly dispositions towards France should be put to so base a use, but complied with the King's wish, and secretly sent him a copy of the balance and number of forces as it stood in 1687.

The miserable poverty of Savoy and the great disproportion between the forces of both countries as cruelly revealed by the balance-sheet satisfied the King that there was no need for him to lose time in diplomatic arguments, and animated by a wish to bring matters to a crisis, he ordered Catinat, the Governor of Casal, to request the Duke's assistance of troops for another expedition against the Waldenses.

Anxious as Victor Amadeus also was to match his strength with France, he was not prepared for this summary demand for troops, but the moment was too critical to run any risk of hurrying on the approaching breach, and, in the hopes of appeasing the increasing irritation shown by Louis XIV., the Duke most unwillingly placed five hundred men at Catinat's disposal. This, however, was but a small

part of the General's demands. Under one pretext and another he had obtained the Duke's permission to advance step by step into Piedmont, and with seven thousand troops under his command had now arrived as far as Orbessano, within a few kilometres of Turin.

On reaching Orbessano, Catinat signified to the Cabinet that he had another communication to lay before the Duke's Council, and summoned one of his ministers to hear the King's instructions. The Abbé di Verrua, in his position as former Ambassador and actual Minister, was delegated for that office, and returned with the intelligence that besides the troops, France claimed from Savoy two fortified places, and had specified the fortresses of Verrua and Turin.

Blank dismay was depicted on all faces at this disturbing communication, which, in other words, meant the sovereignty of France over Savoy. The enemy was at the very gates, and yet to oppose so formidable an opponent with the few troops at the disposal of Savoy was not seriously to be contemplated, and to most minds no resistance could be raised.

Victor Amadeus, however, thought otherwise. The long-wished-for moment of deliverance from his tormentor seemed in sight; no matter that the inequality of strength prognosticated failure, he excluded from his mind all the difficulties of the situation, and lost no time in idle calculations. In the midst of the general agitation he remained calm and imperturbable, the Marquis de St. Thomas alone being taken

into his confidence. With haste, but without hurry, the Duke agreed with his Minister to send the Conte di Brandizzo to the Governor of Milan, to whom he notified the intentions of France to declare war with Spain, which naturally included taking possession of the Milanese country. The Duke earnestly begged for ammunition and troops, and undertook to keep the enemy in check in Piedmont and Lombardy till the Milanese defences were fortified.

To the Abbé Grimani, who was in Turin at this time, Victor Amadeus officially notified his adherence to the League, and requested the immediate despatch of Austrian troops for his assistance.

Having taken these practical steps for the defence of his country, Victor Amadeus now had full scope for utilising his abilities in the art of dissembling. He knew that to gain time was his only chance, and though it was a great temptation to show unreservedly his detestation for a country that wished to reduce him to abject servility, his capacities for cold, unimpassioned calculation never deserted him, and he pushed his dissimulation so far as to write an autograph letter to Louis XIV. This letter contained numerous protestations of respect for the Sovereign, to whose feelings he appealed in consideration of the ties by which they were bound; and in order to prove to His Majesty the sincerity of his professions, the Duke declared his willingness to hand over to Louis XIV. the two citadels.¹

¹ Carutti, p. 106.

The letter was sent to Catinat to forward to the King, and the Duke calmly and quietly proceeded to make good use of the time he had thus surreptitiously obtained. Meanwhile the Conte di Brandizzo had returned with the answer from Fuensalida, the Minister to the Court of Spain at Milan, which was most satisfactory. Through convention with the Minister, a League of defence between Savoy and Spain had been entered on till peace was restored. Three thousand horse and eight or nine thousand foot, placed at the Duke's disposal, were to be sent immediately to Vercelli under the command of the Comte de Louvigny.

The reply from the Emperor equally responded to the Duke's wish, in consequence of which Victor Amadeus signed a paper drawn up by the Abbé Grimani June 4th, binding himself to co-operate with Austria against France, and he further agreed to make no terms without the Emperor's consent, who on his part guaranteed the restoration of Pinerolo to Savoy and a supply of five to six thousand troops.¹

During these important transactions with Austria and Spain the King's answer to the Duke's letter had been received by Catinat, and he handed it to Comte Rébenac, who had replaced d'Arcy as French Ambassador.

Louis XIV. had vented his irritation at his unsatisfactory relations with the Duke on the unfortunate d'Arcy ; and influenced by the Minister, M. de

¹ Carutti, p. 108.

Croissy, who had never liked the Ambassador, the King threw all the blame on his shoulders, and gave it as his opinion that the defiant attitude of the Duke of Savoy was entirely due to d'Arcy's want of tact, which had irritated the Prince and made him suspicious of France. The Ambassador in vain endeavoured to remind the King he had but carried out his royal commands. All remonstrances were useless ; he was recalled from Turin, and after a delay of three months, during which time there was a suspension of affairs between the two countries, in January, 1690, Comte Rébenac was named to the post vacated by d'Arcy.

The King, in his reply to the agreement made by Victor Amadeus to cede the two citadels, expressed satisfaction to have heard from the Duke himself on his compliance to his wishes ; consequently he would give orders to the Governor to take possession of the fortresses at once.

The King's answer had arrived sooner than Victor Amadeus had foreseen ; notwithstanding the celerity with which he had been working, preparations for warfare were not complete.

Overstrained and anxious at the grave responsibilities of his position, on reading this letter which was presented to him by Rébenac as an ultimatum from France, the Duke lost his habitual self-control, flew into a violent temper, and with great irritation exclaimed that his words had been purposely misinterpreted ; he protested against the occupation of

Verrua and Turin, and maintained that his consent had been conditional, not absolute.¹

Catinat, however, who had had proofs on a former occasion of the Duke's ability in finding pretexts to postpone obligations with the ulterior motive of avoiding them altogether, declined to listen to any further discussions : either the fortresses would be handed over to him at once, or he must open hostilities against Savoy.

The Duke saw that no further delay could be looked for. Catinat had given him twenty-four hours to decide whether he accepted or declined to conform to the King's demands. Within the twenty-four hours Victor Amadeus had taken his deliberations, and the Marquis de St. Thomas announced to Rébenac that "owing to the extremity to which he had been pushed by the King, the Duke had been finally compelled to accept offers of assistance from the Spanish troops."

On the same day as this message was conveyed to Rébenac, after having publicly assisted at High Mass in the Cathedral, as was usual with royal personages before entering on a dangerous enterprise, the Duke convoked a meeting of over four hundred of the nobility of Turin in the Council Chamber of the palace. When the august assembly had formed a circle, the doors of the royal apartments were thrown open, and Victor Amadeus, surrounded with his ministers and staff, was ushered into their presence.

¹ Carutti, p. 108.

With grave and composed demeanour Victor Amadeus addressed the nobles anxiously waiting to hear the deliberations taken by the Duke. Possibly this was almost the first occasion that Victor Amadeus spoke with sincerity, and avoiding all exaggeration or needless verbiage, he explained in a few well-chosen words the situation in which he was placed.

He first exposed the impossibility in which he found himself to tolerate any further insults from France, and stated his reasons for entering into an alliance with Spain and Austria ; he was in the daily expectation of the arrival of troops, for already the Comte de Louvigny had crossed the frontier with 7,000 men to assist the Piedmontese, and the Spanish troops would be closely followed by those from Austria. In conclusion the Duke added : " But though the allied armies come to my aid, I place much greater reliance on the valour and devotion of my nobles and people. To their valour and devotion the Princes of Savoy have never appealed in vain."

A murmur of approbation ran through the assemblage at the close of the Duke's address ; this was followed by a unanimous cry of " Viva il Duca ! " He had judged wisely in taking his subjects into his confidence, and as the news spread through the town this cry was joined in by the populace. No dissentient voice was heard at the Duke's decision, and no proof was wanting to show the popularity of his serious resolve. The clergy came forward and offered

the gold and silver church ornaments to assist in the urgent necessities for war ; the Pope applauded the courage shown by the Duke of Savoy, and enthusiasm ran so high in Rome that the Resident of Savoy wrote to Turin : " Since the liberation of Vienna, never had the popular joy been so great." ¹

No sovereign was more keenly interested at the turn of affairs in Savoy than William III., and when the news was corroborated that Victor Amadeus was now an opponent instead of a dependant of Louis XIV., he realised the importance this decision might have on English politics.

Baron de Grovestins, in his *History of William of Orange*, explains the situation in the following words :—

" The affairs of Piedmont and of Northern Italy played an important part in the combinations of William of Orange to humble France. He understood that on this side only France was vulnerable ; he therefore hailed the faults committed by the ministers of Louis XIV., which compelled the Duke of Savoy to throw himself into the arms of the Allies, as a special favour of Providence."

The Conte della Torre, who formerly had been entrusted with other missions, was now deputed by the Duke to proceed to the Hague and there make an official announcement of Savoy's adherence to the League and endeavour to obtain subsidies for the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

approaching war. The first part of the Envoy's communication was received with great approbation ; but the appeal for financial aid did not meet with the same enthusiastic response. Bearing in mind the characteristic thrift of the nation, della Torre hit on an expedient and touched a chord which he thought might rouse the indolent Dutch soul. He gave an assurance that part of the subsidies would be devoted to arming the Waldenses so terribly persecuted by the cruel hand of France, and thus they would be provided with means of defence against future attacks. On the strength of these promises the Dutch contributed 15,000 crowns for the assistance of Savoy, and William of Orange engaged that a monthly subsidy of 20,000 crowns should be sent from England to enable the Duke to sustain the expenses entailed by the war.

The rupture of Savoy with France was the salvation of the Waldenses. In a special clause of the treaty entered into between Austria, England, and the Netherlands, Victor Amadeus revoked the edict he had levied against them in January, 1686, under the pressure of France, and agreed to liberate the prisoners, to restore the children to their parents, and assured them the rights in perpetuity of following the tenets of their religion.¹

Joy spread through the sadly distressed villages at these hopeful tidings, and a deputation waited on the Duke to convey the heartfelt thanks of the whole

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

community. They were personally received by Victor Amadeus, and addressed by him in the following touching words :—

“ We have been enemies, now we must be friends. The origin of your disaster falls on the responsibility of others, but if, as is your bounden duty, you expose your lives for me, I will do likewise for you, and as long as I have a mouthful of bread it will be shared between us. You have one God and one Prince to serve : be faithful to both.¹

The Waldenses were deeply moved at this frank avowal from the Duke of the wrongs they had suffered in the past, and of his friendly intentions for the future. From that day Victor Amadeus gained their support, and, though small in numbers, this mere handful of men could always be reckoned on by the Duke as the most valiant and loyal of his soldiers.

In this moment of consternation and unavoidable agitation, when he was beset on every side by the most urgent claims, strange to say, a wave of sincere interest in the Duchess showed itself not only in the attentions he paid her, but by the way in which he spoke of her to others. There was no accounting for the moods by which Victor Amadeus was governed. His wife seemed to be his chief pre-occupation, and one day, in alluding to her state of health, he said to the person he addressed, “ I

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 132.

assure you it is the Duchess only who seriously fills my thoughts in this state of affairs."

The Duchess, though daily expecting her confinement, preserved her ordinary calm, and announced her intentions, if necessary, of retiring into the Citadel of Turin with her husband. Before, however, she could carry out her courageous suggestion the child's birth took place prematurely on the 25th June, and by the time she had recovered her health the campaign had opened, most disastrously for Savoy, on the 18th August, by the battle of Staffarda. Muratori, in his *Annals of Italian History*, chronicles that "Victor Amadeus took part in battle for the first time and did wonders of bravery," but all the same, it was an inauspicious commencement. The allied armies lost heavily; they left on the field 4,000 killed and 1,500 wounded; over 2,000 were made prisoners; the Piedmontese troops were for the greater part raw and inexperienced, and could not compete with the better disciplined French army.

Much against his will, Victor Amadeus found himself compelled to retreat; this, notwithstanding repeated charges of the French dragoons, he was able to accomplish without loss. He crossed the Po at Moretta, and retired to Carignano, and from thence to Moncalieri.

This unfortunate reverse, in which more valour than prudence had been displayed, was followed up by successive skirmishes, in all of which Catinat, encouraged by the thanks of Louis XIV. and of

Louvois, kept the lead he had obtained. Saluzzo, Savigliano, and other fortified places fell in succession into his hands, and wherever he had been his route could be traced by the fire and sword with which he devastated the country. In the orders he had received from Louvois he was enjoined to burn and destroy, as had been done in the Palatinate, and Catinat gloried in the inhuman sacrifice of life entrusted to him.

In this way the autumn was passing without anything decisive being accomplished, and as the snow began to fall it was expected that Catinat would consider the question of entering into winter quarters; but on November 10th the Duke learnt to his dismay that, in spite of glaciers and snow-drifts, Catinat, with his cannon and infantry, had invested Susa, and Victor Amadeus only arrived in time to see that important fort capitulate on the 13th. After this last important addition to his other successes, Catinat proceeded into Dauphiné for the winter months.

It was inevitable that the complete defeat of the Piedmontese troops at the outset of hostilities should throw a cold chill over the most enthusiastic of the Duke's followers, and as the news that reached Turin, instead of showing an improvement in the situation, always reported fresh reverses, murmurs and discontent increased in proportion. Those who had been foremost in encouraging the Duke to meet the French in battle were now the first to blame him for

his imprudence ; others drew attention to his imperfect knowledge of those subjects indispensable in a general, and prophesied that if the fate of the country were left in the hands of one so rash and inexperienced, evil days must be expected. Even Pope Alexander VIII. was biassed by the general feeling of irretrievable failure, and admonished the Duke to treat for peace.

All these recriminations and unseasonable suggestions were incapable of turning Victor Amadeus aside from the path he intended to pursue. Though he had met his reverses with the spirit of a true warrior, he could not but feel a keen sense of disappointment at the inauspicious opening of the campaign. At the same time, far from being cast down by his first failure, the feeling produced in him by his vicissitudes was contrary to the cowardly weakness by which he was surrounded ; but at this moment nothing could be done, and perhaps it was due to this enforced inertia that he again became absorbed in profound reveries. Try as the Duchess might, she could not rouse him out of his fits of moroseness and depression, nor could she allay his temper. The affection he had shown her a short time previously seemed already to have passed away. It was quite otherwise with the Contessa di Verrua. More adroit than the Duchess, she was not slow to perceive that this was a favourable moment to entice Victor Amadeus again into her confidence ; and he resumed his former intimacy with her.

Many circumstances combined to facilitate Madame

di Verrua's determination to regain possession of the Duke and to renew her influence over him.

Her claims on Victor Amadeus were greatly strengthened by the birth of a child, which had taken place whilst she was still in the convent. Though not endowed with maternal instincts, the child was utilised by the Countess as a bond of union between herself and the Duke, whom she could now see with greater freedom, as all the Verrua family had abandoned Turin and returned to France. The Count had taken with him his own four children and confided their education to the care of his mother.¹

Madame di Verrua's father had also died this year. The Duc de Luynes had never forgiven himself for not having listened to her entreaties to remove her from the dangers to which she eventually succumbed. Remorse at his own apathy in a moment when he might still have saved her, and grief at her conduct, hastened his end. With his death his daughter lost her only mainstay, for as her independence became more complete, her principles fell away one by one, and all her actions were dictated purely by self-interested motives.

With Madame di Verrua's increasing influence over the Duke, her worst qualities came to the surface, and soon quite effaced her former attractions. Moved by a love of power, and totally lacking in any sincere affection for Victor Amadeus, she was solely absorbed in her wish to obtain authority, and it grati-

¹ *La Comtesse de Verrue*, p. 95. G. de Lérès.

fied her pride that she should have enslaved a man who till he met her had never bowed to the will of another.

Everything she did added to her unpopularity; the imperious manners she adopted gave bitter offence, and, to quote from St. Simon, "before long the new mistress dominated the Court of Savoy: the Sovereign was at her feet as before a goddess. She influenced his disposal of favours, and was feared by the ministers, who nevertheless found themselves compelled to listen to her. She was detested by all for her haughtiness."

The Countess achieved one of her greatest triumphs in January, 1691, when she used so much pressure with Victor Amadeus that he agreed to her wish, and appointed her lady of the bedchamber (*dame d'atours*) to the Duchess. Madame di Verrua had fully weighed the advantages of this stroke of policy. Not only did the appointment confer on her a supreme position at Court, but it assured her an apartment in the palace. She was thus able to forget the loss of her husband's home; and as she proudly took possession of the one provided her by royal favour, it fed her vanity, as a new proof of her influence over the Duke.

In his wish to gratify Madame di Verrua's demand, Victor Amadeus had never paused to consider the mortification he was inflicting on the Duchess, who, as was her wont, accepted with silent submission the painful position he had forced on her.

The magnanimous long-sufferance shown by the

Duchess in these painful circumstances can only be explained by her absolutely guileless nature combined with the deep affection that bound her to the Duke, which enabled her to condone his behaviour, however outrageous. Her admiration for him was so great that he really inspired her more with pity than anger, and, moved rather by feelings of resigned grief such as a mother would bear towards a child who had pained her, she suppressed the indignation of a wife, and did not lower her dignity by making him scenes of jealousy.

The Contessa di Verrua's manners, so overbearing and insolent to others, were unconsciously modified by the Duchess's singularly sweet nature, and it was noticed that when in her presence the Countess always showed her the greatest respect, and treated Her Royal Highness with submissive reverence ; so much so, that the gracious lady, who was always ready to recognise the good and to ignore all that was bad in others, appreciated the courtesy shown her by the Court favourite, and was thus afforded one more occasion during her sorely tried life of bestowing a saint-like pardon.

The following words, written by one who frequented the Duke's Court at Turin, seem to indicate the simplicity of the position adopted by the Duchess and her uncomplaining self-effacement :—

“ She is a Princess of great virtue, who has studied the Duke's character, and has found the surest way of adapting herself to it. In this spirit she leads a very

retired life, and takes no part at all in any sort of affairs. It might be said that almost in spite of himself the Prince has been forced to render to her wisdom and her merits all the justice that is due to her.”¹

In the meantime, whilst Victor Amadeus was employing this short period of relaxation from arduous duties in contenting the Countess's caprices, the short winter days were perceptibly lengthening, the snow was fast melting under the ardent rays of the unclouded Italian sun, and Catinat gave signs of waking from his sleep, and left his lair ready to resume the combat.

At the commencement of March, 1691, deliberations were taken at the Hague by the representatives of the League bearing on the interests of the different countries by which it was composed. It was recognised that owing to a want of funds the Emperor Leopold had been dilatory in carrying out the obligations he had incurred. A sum of money was accordingly voted to enable Austria to equip 6,000 horse and 9,000 foot soldiers, and in order to maintain the expenses of war, William III. agreed with the Conte della Torre to continue the subsidies previously granted to Savoy. The Elector of Bavaria assisted personally at the conference, and offered to assume the command of the Imperial troops and to proceed to Turin to the assistance of his cousin, and thus return the Duke's visit to Venice four years

¹ Corres., Savoie, Relation faite le 15 Juillet, 1692.

previously. Besides these notable additions to the fighting resources of Savoy, five battalions of Protestant emigrants were armed by William III. and despatched to Italy under the command of the Duke of Schomberg.¹

Still, with all these increased forces at the disposal of Savoy, the renewed campaign opened badly for Italy. Before Victor Amadeus had had time to occupy himself with the defence of Nice, he heard of its capitulation. Catinat next took possession of Avigliano, and from thence proceeded to Rivoli, where the spectacle of his favourite palace in flames was witnessed by the Duke from one of the surrounding hills.

It might almost be said that the enemy was in the town, and the panic-stricken population began to abandon Turin, hurriedly gathering together all the objects of value they possessed. The departure of the Duchess added new fears to the gravity of the situation, as her unostentatious courage was recognised by all, and it was known she would not leave the capital were there not serious motives that compelled her to do so. The Duke insisted on her retiring to Vercelli, but before she could reach their country seat, she was laid up at Chivasso and gave birth prematurely to a son, who died the same day that he was born. The Duchess herself was dangerously ill, and for a few days great alarm was felt as to her condition.

¹ Carutti, p. 121.

The loss of the long-wished-for heir was a misfortune in more ways than one, as it was generally understood that William III. seriously contemplated the scheme of having the Duke's son brought over to England and educated as a Protestant, in which case he might gain a Parliamentary title. This project was no doubt suggested by the fact that only the frail life of the Duke of Gloucester stood between the succession and other claimants.

Contrary to expectation, Catinat, though at a stone's-throw from Turin, did not proceed to enter the town ; but after the conflagration of Rivoli he retreated to Carmagnola on June 9th and took it by assault. He then turned his attentions to the more important place of Cuneo, but the determined resistance made by the besieged, aided by the clergy, the women, and even the children, combined with the arrival of fresh troops under the command of Prince Eugène, proved too formidable for the French, and with a loss of 4,000 men and 50 officers, they abandoned guns and ammunition and beat a most disorderly retreat.

This first success of the Piedmontese troops was a cause for great rejoicing in Turin, and the turn of good fortune was rendered still more complete by the news of the death of Louvois on July 16th. During his long administration no one had been a more bitter enemy to Savoy. He had never vacillated in the hostile policy he had adopted towards her, and was held responsible for the tactless measures employed by Louis XIV. against Piedmont. The

detestation of Louvois in northern Italy was as profound as it deserved to be, and this feeling was so well known in Paris that in order that sentiments antagonistic to Savoy, as instigated by Louvois, should be maintained, the report was purposely spread that the Minister's death was due to the Duke of Savoy, who had employed means to poison his enemy. No one who reflected seriously gave any attention to this futile charge ; but it served its purpose, and kept up the bitter spirit of animosity harboured by France against Savoy.¹

¹ *Histoire de Louvois*, vol. iv. p. 500.

CHAPTER III

VICTOR AMADEUS ABANDONS THE LEAGUE AND AGREES TO PROPOSALS FROM FRANCE

The loss of the Fort of Montmélian—Louis XIV. encourages Catinat in devastating the country—The illness of the Contessa di Verrua—She is nursed by the Duke—Proposals of peace on the part of France—They are repudiated by Victor Amadeus—He starts for Embrun—His serious illness—Sorrow of the Duchess—She obtains his consent to join him—The convalescence is passed at the Villa della Regina—The storming of Santa Brigida—The disaster at Marsaglia—Renewed negotiations for peace—The terms offered to Savoy—The outcry raised by the confederates—The Duke fights against his allies—The consequent collapse of the League.

ON the 18th August the Elector of Bavaria and the Duke of Schomberg entered Turin in state with their troops. The delight of the people was at its height as they saw the procession marching through the town, with the Elector and Victor Amadeus at the head of the regiments. By their side was the pompous Maréchal Caraffa, the Emperor's plenipotentiary in Italy. The Maréchal was the bearer of many secret instructions. Amongst others, he was charged to employ great caution, not to expose his men to unnecessary dangers ; but the main point on which he had to insist was to act so that the power of the Empire should be fully recognised by the

Court of Savoy. No one was better fitted to execute these instructions than the Maréchal, who carried his haughtiness so far as barely to bow to Victor Amadeus and treated the Duchess with patronising familiarity.¹

The only fortress of Savoy that had not fallen into the enemy's hands was that of Montmélian, and with the important additions to his army the Duke was most desirous of advancing to the assistance of the besieged, who for over a year had bravely resisted the unceasing assaults of the French.

Maréchal Caraffa, however, had other designs in his mind, and under the pretext that it would expose his men to great danger owing to the preponderance of French troops in the proximity of Montmélian, with dogged self-will he refused to enter into the Duke's views, and thus on the 21st December, after a heroic defence, Montmélian surrendered with all the honours of war.

This fortress was the most important of all the strongholds of Savoy, and was considered one of the strongest in Europe. It stood in an imposing position about sixteen miles from Chambéry. In the days of Henri IV. it had proved impervious to the siege laid to it by that monarch, who expressed his amazement at the way it resisted his battery of sixty cannons, and exclaimed that it was "*une merveilleuse forte place et la meilleure qu'il vit jamais.*" The impregnable rock would have resisted, perhaps, still

¹ Carutti, 125.

longer had it not been for the intrigues of Sully's wife with Comtesse Brandès to persuade her husband, who defended the fort, to capitulate in order to save the starving inhabitants.

The importance of the possession of Montmélian was fully realised in Paris, and *Te Deums* were sung in the churches on reception of the news.

By the fall of Montmélian the whole of Savoy was put in the power of France, and Victor Amadeus, highly indignant at Caraffa's conduct, on whom he threw the responsibility of the loss of the fortress, wrote to Vienna to complain that the Maréchal had run counter to the interests of Piedmont during the whole campaign. The Duke also accused the General of overbearing vanity and insolent behaviour, in which statements he was corroborated by Prince Eugène. The consequence was that Caraffa was recalled, and was replaced by General Caprara, and in order to pacify the Duke's irritation against Austria the Emperor conferred upon Victor Amadeus the supreme command of the allied troops in Italy.¹

Previous to the close of the campaign of 1691 Victor Amadeus regained possession of Rivoli, Avigliano, and Carmagnola. This was but small compensation for the loss of Montmélian, and when the Duke visited these places that were again in his hands, any satisfaction he might have felt on recovering them was dispelled as he witnessed the devastation on every side. He was profoundly

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

grieved at the spectacle before him. His distress was further increased when he was accosted by his impoverished and starving countrymen, who crawled out from the few blackened ruins of their former homes, and in piteous terms testified to their misery. Victor Amadeus was moved to tears, and in one of those generous impulses by which he won the hearts of the people, he emptied his own purse and those of his officers, and taking off his collar of the Annunziata, broke it up and distributed the pieces to the hapless victims of the war.¹

The French did not retire to their winter quarters without pursuing their cruel custom of destroying everything that fell in their power. In the words of a report sent by the Marquis de Fouquières to Paris, in speaking of the unfortunate Waldensian population, "these people have not even a handful of straw on which to sleep. We were told that at Bobbio we should find their storehouses and hospital, but there was no vestige of either one or the other—nothing remained save a few pounds of rhubarb. It is impossible, without having seen it, to realise how hard and pitiful are the lives of these people."²

Louis XIV. remained unmoved at the numerous reports relating to the sufferings of the people, and when Catinat stated that in the valley of Aosta he had devastated it entirely, the King on this, and similar occasions, encouraged the work of destruction in the following words: "It is a pity it should be necessary

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

² *Anna di Savoia*, p. 146.

to burn the villages to force the people into submission, but as neither menace nor persuasions succeed, you must not cease to employ harsh measures.”¹

Victor Amadeus was still inconsolable at the loss of Montmélian ; he brooded incessantly over Caraffa’s base conduct, and it was only the serious illness of the Contessa di Verrua that roused him out of the melancholy into which he had sunk, and distracted his attention from what it was useless now to regret.

So sudden was the Contessa’s illness and unaccounted for, that, as was always the case in those days, when diagnosis was in the most elementary stage, poison could alone be suggested as the cause ; it was further stated that the Duke had administered an antidote and thus saved her life.

This report, however, proved to be quite unfounded. Madame di Verrua’s illness was a most severe attack of small-pox, the marks that slightly disfigured her in consequence left no room for doubt. The Duke showed the greatest anxiety as to the turn the illness might take, and nursed her with assiduous devotion.

The Contessa, who only regained her strength very slowly, was never entirely restored to her former health : and she herself favoured the story that poison was the cause of her illness. The fear and unpopularity she inspired was in her opinion an attribute of power ; it also increased her hold over

¹ *Histoire de Louvois*, vol. iv. p. 508.

Victor Amadeus, from whose uncertain moods and irritable temper she suffered as much as others.

As the intimacy between the Duke and the Contessa increased, their quarrels became more violent and of greater frequency. The Princess Palatine in her correspondence often referred to the differences that arose between Victor Amadeus and the Contessa and said: "I have been told that the Duke and Madame di Verrua quarrel for days together"; and at a later date, speaking of his combative nature, the Princess Palatine again wrote to a friend: "The Duke of Savoy, King of Sicily, always commences his love-making with disputes and discussions."¹

The Contessa's influence over the Duke notwithstanding remained unimpaired, and however violent the scene, eventually he invariably adopted her views on the subject in dispute. Little by little Victor Amadeus acquired the habit of confiding to Madame di Verrua, facts that he would never have divulged to another. He sought her counsel on matters of political importance, and as her influence over the Marquis de St. Thomas was equally powerful, the Minister's diplomatic prudence succumbed to her charms, and he imparted to her many secret communications to be turned to her advantage on the first opportune occasion.

The early part of 1692 slipped by in dissensions amongst the generals of the various armies on the tactics to be pursued; some time was also passed in

¹ *Lettres de la Palatine*, 1716.

considering secret proposals from France, whose envoy, M. de Chamley, had arrived in Turin to express the King's desire to come to terms with Savoy.

The Duke had no intention of agreeing to any project that might be agreeable to Louis XIV., who showed a strong wish to separate Savoy from the Grand Alliance, and the envoy's persistence on the subject annoyed him considerably. One day when M. de Chamley had again returned to the charge, and had pointed out the ridiculously small number of men at the Duke's disposal, Victor Amadeus lost all patience, and in great irritation exclaimed, "Monsieur, I have but to stamp my native soil with my foot, and more soldiers than I require would emerge," and declined any further discussion on that question.

The Duke having dismissed from his consideration all suggestion of agreeing to the King's terms, the generals came to the decision of attacking the enemy in their own country, and agreed on the invasion of Dauphiné.

Victor Amadeus was not much inclined to this move, but he found he had to follow the decision of the majority.

This short campaign, which by these numerous dissensions was delayed till August, was chiefly remembered by the cruelties inflicted by the German as well as the Piedmontese troops on the inhabitants of Embrun and Gap, both of which towns fell easily into the hands of the allied armies. To have pro-

ceeded to Grenoble would have been a matter of no difficulty, but renewed differences between those commanding, and the Duke's serious attack of small-pox, were obstacles to a further advance. In consequence of these hesitations, and in conformity with the secret orders received to spare their troops, the generals decided to retreat, and the Duke was left at Embrun, where for a long time he hung between life and death. He himself felt so convinced of the gravity of his condition that he is stated to have made his will and named the young Prince de Carignan, the son of his deaf and dumb uncle, his heir.

On receiving these desperate accounts from Embrun, the Duchess was nearly distracted with grief and uncertainty as to how to act for the best. Whenever the Duke was away on his campaigns she never had a moment's peace till he returned : she knew how precarious was his health, but at the same time she never dared inquire after him or give him any word of warning and advice. She usually appealed to the Marquis de St. Thomas, who always accompanied Victor Amadeus in his expeditions, and implored him to watch over his master, and keep her informed on the state of his health. This time the Duchess could hardly restrain her first impulse to start off immediately for the Duke's bedside, but again she hesitated, as even in this crucial moment of anxiety she remembered how imperious Victor Amadeus was in his command for strict obedience to his injunction that she must always wait for orders ; had

it but entailed annoyance to herself she would not have cared, but she feared to excite his anger by disobeying him and thus aggravate his illness.

The Duchess wrote a letter to St. Thomas, every word of which gave evidence of her deep emotion. She expressed her ardent desire to be near the Duke, and concluded pathetically, "I have told you my wish, but I know it is useless."¹

At the same time the Duchess wrote a few lines to her husband in which, without laying undue stress on her heart's desire, she timidly hazarded the suggestion of wishing to be with him; the intense longing that he should grant her request is expressed in the following simple words:—

"TURIN, 30th August, 1692.

"Mme. Royale sent to me this morning for news of you, and I gave her all the information I could, for I myself only know what you choose to tell me. You can realise the state of uncertainty in which I am living—sometimes I hope, at other times I fear. I really cannot express all I feel, but for myself the worst of all is to be far from you and unable to serve you. Had you been in our States, I would have begged you, should your illness continue, to give me the permission to go and join you. Not being able to carry out this wish, though my attachment to you is as warm as it can possibly be, I pray God to restore you to health, which will give some respite to my anxiety. Madame Royale paid you a

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 156.

great compliment by telling me that she wished she could go and be of service to you, and the Marquis Mourouse says that according as events turn, I must go with Madame Royale to a place nearer you. You can well think that I do not hope for such good fortune, and that I shall never do anything without your permission, but, I repeat, if unfortunately your present state of health does not improve and you think I could be of service to you, pray give me this consolation ; it would be the greatest mark of affection that you could bestow on me. I assure you I can perfectly well go without causing any embarrassment. Only my two ladies would accompany me. I should be pleased at this arrangement if even I cannot be quite alone with you. You would then see of what a fond affection is capable. You may well believe I should neglect nothing that would lead you to feel that I love you as my life.”¹

This time Victor Amadeus was more amenable to his wife’s appeal ; so sure was he of being beyond all hope of recovery that he charged St. Thomas to tell the Duchess of his wish that she should join him.

No sooner was this welcome call received, than the Duchess started without any break in her journey till she reached Villafalletto ; here against her will she had to wait for the sedan chair in which she was to complete her fatiguing voyage. She occupied the short rest in this little place in writing the following

¹ Letters from the Duchess of Savoy, Anna d’Orléans, written to her husband, Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy. State Archives, Turin.

lines, breathing of anxious love, to the Marquis de St. Thomas :—

“*From VILLAFALLETTO, 2nd September, 1692.*

“As soon as I was informed by the Marquise de Somarive that His Royal Highness approved of my joining him, I started, and have just arrived here. I am waiting for the chair I was told I should find, and meanwhile I am sending the required remedies. I am dying of impatience to be near H.R.H., towards whom I feel extreme gratitude that he should afford me the consolation of waiting on him, and to you I am grateful to have informed me of his permission. Pray offer him my compliments until I can present them myself.”

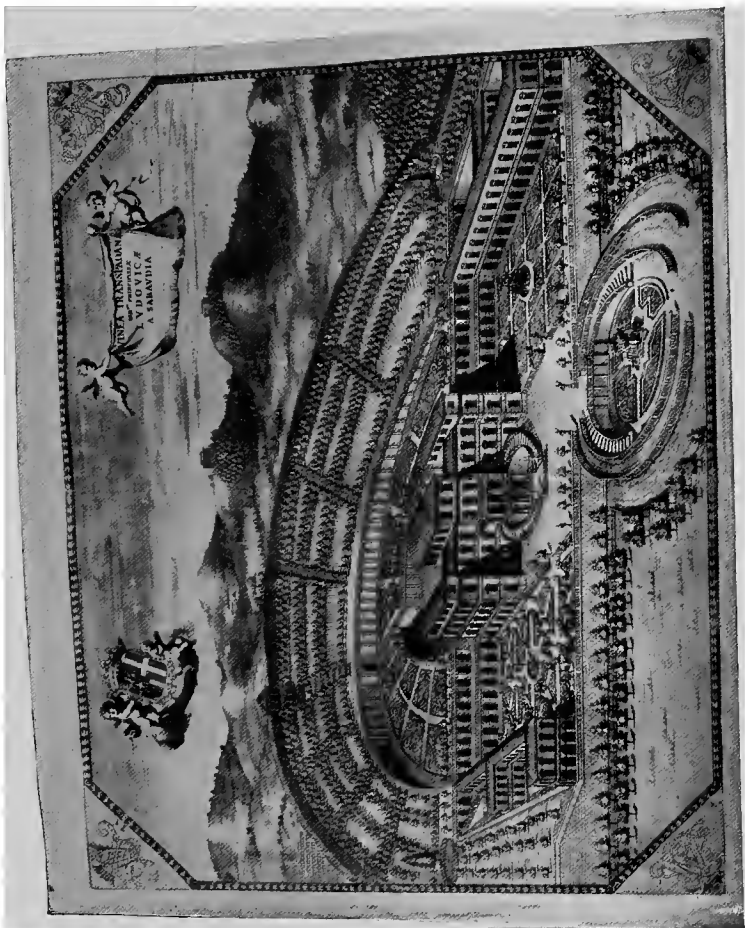
These words, so ingenuously expressed, show the eagerness with which she counted on the moment to be with her husband, who, betray and pain her as he might, remained the love of her life. The progress over the steep mountains and precipitous paths was far too slow to satisfy her breathless longing to be near the sick-bed. The country was disorganised by the ravages of war, and there was a certain amount of danger in traversing the scenes of recent fighting ; but, save that they hindered her advance and impeded her progress, all these difficulties were held of no account by the Duchess, and after many days of discomfort she finally reached Embrun. On her arrival she at once wrote to Madame Royale the happiness it was to her to be able to attend on Victor Amadeus and the relief it

had been to find he was less ill than she had dared to hope; she feared chiefly that his eyes might remain affected, "those dear eyes," that were so painful and prevented him sleeping. This and other bulletins written in the same strain were sent daily to Madame Royale. Regarding herself there was never any mention. She was solely occupied with tender solicitude for her husband, a task all the more praiseworthy, for his irascibility was most trying to the patience of those assisting him.

Sometimes the accounts were hopeful, at other times the Duchess spoke of renewed fever and a relapse, and the letters at once assumed a tone of despair; but after alternating hopes and fears, at last she wrote to Madame Royale that the Duke had sufficiently recovered to be allowed to travel by easy stages, and she herself was to precede him to Turin.

The journey was not accomplished without great difficulty, and when the Duke joined the Duchess in Turin, the doctors considered it imperative that he should be removed to a more salubrious climate. The Duchess trembled at the thought that Victor Amadeus would be again parted from her, and implored St. Thomas to arrange so that the Duke might be sent to some place where she could be with him.

Fortunately for her, it was Victor Amadeus who took the decision into his own hands; he did not wish to be far from Turin, and chose the Villa della Regina



From an old print in the Museo Civico, Turin

THE VILLA DELLA REGINA, TURIN, AS IT WAS IN 1680

Facing p. 344

as the place the most adapted, where he could be within easy distance of his ministers. The Duke could not have made a happier choice. The Villa was built in 1649 by Cardinal Maurice of Savoy, the son of Charles Emmanuel I. and the Infanta Christine of Austria. Situated above the Po, on the slopes of a wooded hill, the Cardinal, who was a lover of literary pursuits, chose this exquisite site as an appropriate place for holding his Academy, which went by the name of "Accademia dei Solinghi," or "Solitari," denoting his wish to dedicate this retreat to seclusion and solitude.

When Cardinal Maurice died he left this property, in which nature and art had combined to create such perfection, to his niece, Ludovica Maria of Savoy: on her death he bequeathed it to the successive Princesses of the House of Savoy.

In the Cardinal's day it was called the Vigna di Madama, doubtless owing to the vineyards that occupied the grounds subsequently laid out in gardens by the Cardinal, and not until Duchess Anna became Queen of Sicily was this retreat known by its present name of Villa della Regina.

The house, occupied at the present time as an institute for the daughters of military commanders, has been left in its original state of tasteful decorations. The dainty chiné silks still drape many of the walls, and the painted panels representing Chinese scenes are essentially a feature of decoration during the reign of Louis XIV., and show the French in-

fluence so frequently to be met with in the style of furnishing in the palaces of Turin.

The grounds correspond to the same period of ornamentation, and are laid out in terraces that lead up to the top of the steep hill at the back of the Villa ; here and there belvideres and temples, almost hidden by the shaded groves, invite repose and meditation.

The Villa was a favourite haunt of all the royal children, and none enjoyed the hours of recreation in these grounds more than Duchess Anna's two daughters. In after years, when they had left their home, they often referred, in writing to their mother and grandmother, to the ideal garden that still lingered in their recollection.

This Villa, within half an hour's drive from Turin, was considered a very long distance from town then. Madame Royale spoke of it as being far away in the country, for which she had no taste, and she therefore went there as rarely as possible.

Victor Amadeus, on the contrary, as he advanced in years also shared the taste of his family for the Vigna ; he frequently stayed there, and once a week he used to receive the envoys and ambassadors who went to pay him their respects.

In a report on the House of Savoy in 1708, Guicciardini, the Envoy of the Duke of Modena, who often speaks of his visits to the Vigna, says : "Many a time while there the Duchess honoured me by accompanying me to the garden, where she

conversed with me before going to Mass, after which she goes to table.”¹

Great hopes were entertained that the absolute repose of this enchanting retreat and the pure air of the hillside would bring colour to the Duke's pallid cheeks and restore his shattered health, but the repeated fluctuations from recovery to relapse caused fresh discouragement, and on the 14th February of 1693 the Duke had such a serious crisis that the worst was expected, and the Prince de Carignan, anticipating a change of Government, and in fear of possible disorders, sent all his furniture and valuables to the citadel for safety. The Austrian and Spanish generals were so preoccupied that they never left the Duke's anteroom for many hours.

The Court of Versailles followed breathlessly the unaccountable ebb and flow of the Duke's illness. His health was as puzzling in its rapid changes as were the vacillations of his character. The peculiarities of his constitution were still more incomprehensible, when instead of the fatal termination expected from one moment to another, he disappointed the calculations of the French Government, and after a very severe attack only a few days previously he was to be found on the 11th July at the storming of the Fort of Santa Brigida giving directions for the attack with his accustomed vigour. Santa Brigida was an outlying fort of Pinerolo erected by the French to defend the town.

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 163.

No one could have imagined on seeing the marvellous capacities for endurance of which Victor Amadeus gave evidence that this was a man who had lain at death's door and had risen from his sick-bed to show his men of what a Prince of Savoy was capable. He never left his horse from dawn to sundown : generally to be seen on the most prominent heights, his troops, by whom he was beloved, gathered courage and fought with fresh animation, knowing they were under the scrutinising eye of their leader. Familiar with his men, austere towards his officers, he was a wonderful study of the complexity of human nature.

His appearance alone formed a striking picture as, seated on horseback, he surveyed the army under his command. An enormous wig fell in curls from under a three-cornered hat on to his shoulders ; nothing escaped his restless blue eyes, that took note of all that was going on in the different quarters of the attack ; his face bore traces of his recent illness, and his nose was slightly marked with the ineffaceable signs of small-pox ; but there was no symptom of any relaxation of his wonderful vitality. Each time that the cannon boomed those near him overheard grumbling imprecations escape his lips in broken sentences against France ; and as he muttered, "So France considers me her slave"—"She prohibited my journey to Venice"—"I am the hatred of Louvois," he emphasised his grievances by striking the saddle with his fist. All the bitterness of the

past years that, like a festering wound, had been eating into his soul found relief in these soliloquies.

Another noticeable figure in the storming of that fort, though of an entirely different type, was that of Prince Eugène.

The "Little Abbé" excited enthusiasm wherever he was to be seen. It mattered but little that he was delicate of appearance, insignificant, and partly deformed, as, almost hidden in his cuirass decorated with a blue rosette glinting in the sun, he galloped in front of his men, apostrophising them in every language that came into his head, his eyes sparkling with excitement; his audacious, impetuous, and jovial nature communicated itself to his troops, and they fought with renewed tenacity under his influence.

On the evening of the first Saturday in August Prince Eugène had made a bet of 100 "doppie"¹ with Victor Amadeus that at the following dawn he would hear Mass in the Fort of Santa Brigida. And he meant to do it.

Five armies covered the hills like swarms of ants, one and all animated with the desire to crush the power that the devastating French King had asserted over Europe for so long.

The Anglo-Dutch, the Piedmontese, English, Dutch, Germans, the persecuted Waldenses, and the French Protestants, these 30,000 men of divers nationalities fought desperately and carried the day.²

¹ A doppia is worth about 40 francs.

² *Alle Porte d'Italia*, De Amicis.

This success was unfortunately not followed up. Errors were made which led to the subsequent defeat at Marsaglia, as severe a shock to the confederates as had been that of Staffarda.

On that fatal 4th October the Allies lost between 9,000 and 10,000 men. Amongst those fallen on the field of battle was the Marchese di Parella, one of the Duke's best generals, a son of the Marquis de St. Thomas, the Marchese Pallavicino, and many others of the Piedmontese nobility. The old Duke of Schomberg, severely wounded, was transported to Turin, where he died shortly after; he was succeeded by Lord Galway in the command of the Protestant divisions.¹

The enemy's losses were only about 2,000. Catinat was carried in triumph on the standards taken by the French from their opponents, and the General's satisfaction was complete when he received the following lines of congratulation from Louis XIV. :—

“I always expected a great success in Piedmont, but in the splendid victory you have obtained over my enemies you have surpassed all my hopes, increased my esteem for you, and you have proved yourself worthy of my trust by the way you have served the State.
“LOUIS.”²

Victor Amadeus retired to Moncalieri greatly disconcerted, and the state of misery to which his country

¹ Baron Portarlington and Viscount Galway, created earl in 1697. Lieutenant-General of the Forces in Savoy and Envoy Extraordinary.

² *Mémoires de Catinat*, vol. ii. p. 230.

was reduced made him reflect that if France would agree to meet him on his own terms, it would be advisable to consider her proposals. Louis XIV. himself, notwithstanding his successes, was not only heartily weary of the war, but was also determined to separate Savoy from the Grand Alliance, and Pope Innocent XII. was equally unceasing in his efforts to press Victor Amadeus to make peace. A pilgrimage taken by the Duke to Loreto, in fulfilment of a vow made during his illness, was but a pretext to confer with the Venetian Ambassador, the Nunzio, and an envoy sent by Catinat.

At this meeting the principal points relating to a treaty were discussed, by which either the neutrality of Italy would be recognised, or arrangements for peace would be made between the Duke and France.

On the Duke's return to Turin, these preliminary negotiations were still further matured with the Governor of Pinerolo, the Comte de Tessé, who, it was reported, arrived there disguised as a postillion, was admitted by a back staircase into the palace, and remained there secretly for several days, during which time he had frequent interviews with the Duke and the Marquis de St. Thomas.¹

In spite of all the precautions taken to ensure secrecy, these surreptitious transactions began to leak out. France had no interest to keep concealed the probable defection of Savoy from her engagements with the Allies, and though Victor Amadeus still

¹ *La Comtesse de Verrue*, p. 105.

hesitated until he was sure of what he was to gain from France before he finally broke with the confederates, there was an outcry of indignation against him as the certainty gained ground that he was playing fast and loose with his friends. At Milan, says Muratori, "he was spoken of as a traitor and accused of black ingratitude towards his allies, whose blood he had shed for the pure gratification of his own interests."¹

The concessions made by France to Savoy were, however, too considerable for any further hesitation on the part of the Duke ; and after over a year had been passed in each country trying to get the best of the other, a treaty was signed with France May 30th, 1696.

The King agreed to give up Pinerolo to Savoy on condition that the fortress should be razed to the ground, and he promised to restore Montmélian and Susa to the Duke as soon as peace was declared. Nice and Villafranca would be given back immediately on the signing of the treaty. The point so long in dispute relating to the ambassadors was finally settled. In future they would, in every Court of Europe, hold the position of those representing crowned heads.

One of the most binding guarantees of peace between France and Savoy was the agreement entered into by Louis XIV. and the Duke of Savoy for a marriage between the Duc de Bourgogne, the eldest

¹ *Annali*, MDCXCVI.

son of the Dauphin, and Princess Marie Adélaïde of Savoy, the Duke's eldest daughter.

The Duke promised on his part to try and obtain from his old allies their recognition of the neutrality of Italy ; should they refuse, he would join his forces to those of the King of France. The Duke was given supreme command over the Franco-Piedmontese troops, and in virtue of this appointment received 100,000 crowns each month as long as the war lasted.¹

A truce had been proclaimed of a few months' duration, which were passed by the Emperor of Austria in trying to win back Victor Amadeus to his engagement, whilst the Duke, seduced by the brilliant offers made him by France, was as busily employed in trying to shake himself free of all obligations with the Allies, and impatiently requested them out of his country, although his efforts were not crowned with success.

The armistice expired on the 15th September, and without the slightest compunction, Victor Amadeus, from being Generalissimo of the Allied Armies, became Generalissimo of the French troops in Italy. In a magnificent uniform, embroidered with golden fleur-de-lis, he rode at the head of his troops, and met Catinat at Collegno, where they agreed to besiege Valenza in the Milanese. The attack was vigorously maintained, and Valenza would have fallen had not the Allies, under pressure from the King of Spain,

¹ *La Comtesse de Verrue*, p. 106.

signed a treaty agreeing to a suspension of arms until the proclamation of a general peace.¹

No terms were strong enough to express the disrepute into which Victor Amadeus had fallen in all countries, and this feeling was still more intensified in England. The Duke's name was bandied about, and only mentioned in terms of derision and contempt.

When it was known he had sent an Ambassador Extraordinary to France to acknowledge the son of James II. as the King's legitimate heir to the throne of Great Britain, his unpopularity was still further sealed. Victor Amadeus had gladly seized the possibility of being once more in touch with his Stuart relations, who commanded his sympathy, not entirely devoid of interest, in view of the results that might arise from his change of politics.

Personal advantages were certainly not overlooked, when Victor Amadeus made renewed advances to the exiles living under the protection of France, whose sad vicissitudes had always occupied his attention.

At the Hague the defection of the Duke from the League was heard with intense disgust, and the uncomfortable position in consequence of the Ambassador, the Conte della Torre, is best realised in his own words :—

“6th November, 1696.

“The people are very excited, and are beginning to ask what business I have here ; they are indignant that I should be allowed to remain, and wish me to

¹ *Histoire de Louvois*, vol. iv. p. 537.

be turned away. This sentiment runs so high that a plot has been discovered to pillage my house and to tear me to pieces. M. le Pensionnaire at first gave orders for my safety, and to spare me from insults, ordered a patrol of infantry and cavalry all the night through ; but it is a remedy that instead of pacifying the conspirators only embitters them the more.”¹

Even private individuals could not conceal their disgust at the Duke's conduct, and the young Prince de Commercy, an officer under the command of Prince Eugène, wishing to show his disdain for Victor Amadeus, sent him a challenge. It was accepted by the Duke, but the duel was prohibited by the leaders of the Allies.

The means adopted by Victor Amadeus to arrive at the ends he proposed cannot always be commended. The absence of loyalty in his dealings had grown with his years, and the habit of prevarication formed in his boyhood had so increased with time that he no longer paused to think on the correctness of the schemes he meditated, or if they strictly conformed with the codes of honour.

To justify his breach of faith with the Allies, the Duke was convinced that they had consulted their own interests entirely during the campaign, and had completely neglected those relating to Savoy. In fact he had learnt from the Conte della Torre, who enjoyed the confidence of William of Orange, that

¹ Carutti, p. 158.

the Spanish troops had taken part in the siege of Casal solely on the understanding that it should be restored to its former owner, the Duke of Mantua,¹ and that, contrary to the engagement made with Savoy, it was the intention of the Allies, in view of peace, to give up Pinerolo to France. When they recognised their mistake of not honestly keeping their engagements it was too late. The exertions made by them to prevent Victor Amadeus from carrying out his premeditated design was an acknowledgment of the value they set on his support; the defection of Savoy from the League led to its dissolution. In this way, in spite of all reverses, the small state of Savoy, hitherto held of no account by the other European powers, singled out for the contemptuous interference of France, had at last asserted herself. The new treaty with France was but the precursor of that of Ryswick in 1697.

The withdrawal of Savoy having led to the breaking up of the famous Alliance, in which the most powerful countries in Europe were interested, gave great importance to this comparatively small State, and infinite credit to the Duke, who became one of the most notable personages of the day.

¹ *Mémoires de Catinat*, vol. iii. p. 334.

CHAPTER IV

RENEWED OPPOSITION TO FRANCE

The Marchese and Marchesa di Susa—The luxury of the Contessa di Verrua's life—Her departure for St. Moritz—The receptions in her honour—Her confidential communications with Tessé—She offers her services to Louis XIV.—Her letters on the subject—Princess Adélaïde leaves for France—The Duchess's joy at the proposed marriage with the Duc de Bourgogne—The Princess is accompanied by the Court—Her reception by Louis XIV. at Montargis—His favourable impression of the Princess—The birth of the Prince of Piedmont—Rejoicings and festivities in consequence—The pilgrimages of Madame Royale.

PREVIOUS to the conclusion of the treaty with France, a great deal of business had to be dealt with that claimed the Duke's close attention ; his time was fully occupied in correspondence and councils with his ministers. Consequently his leisure moments were very limited ; such as he could dispose of, however, were dedicated to Madame di Verrua, who was anxiously waiting to return to the enjoyment of his favours.

The Duke's illness and his frequent absence from Turin whilst the war lasted had led to a break in their intimacy, but it was only temporary, and further publicity was added to his relations with her in March, 1695, by the christening of their two children in the private chapel of the palace. The girl, already

mentioned, born in 1690, received the name of Vittoria of Savoy, and the son, who was four years younger, that of Vittorio Francesco. The Marchese and Marchesa de St. Thomas and the Marchese Dronero and his wife stood as godparents to the children. This was but the first step towards establishing their legitimacy, for though many difficulties had been raised by the *Chambre des Comptes* of Turin in 1701, an Act was passed by which they were recognised under the titles of Marchese and Marchesa di Susa. An appanage of 50,000 livres was granted to each child, and a palace was given to the son. A few years later these primary concessions were enlarged on by Victor Amadeus, who decreed that "both the Marchese di Susa and his sister had a right to the title of 'Highness,' they were further privileged to accompany the Queen to Mass, and seats, though of a different colour, were assigned to them behind those of the Princes of blood royal. Mademoiselle di Susa was also to be admitted to the circles held by the Queen and Madame Royale, and her place would be only one step further back than that of the Princesses of the blood."¹

Nothing could have been more inappropriate than the moment chosen for the first donations to the children. There was a menace of famine all over Piedmont, corn and wine had reached prohibitive prices, a severe frost in 1695 had also seriously damaged the vineyards, and wine became such a

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 312. Biblioteca del Re, Torino.

rarity that beer had to be fabricated for the people's use. The pinch of poverty was felt by all classes, and it did not add to Madame di Verrua's popularity when it was known that, in order to support her children, taxes were raised on salt, and the revenues of the various districts (*communes*) served to pay the pensions.

Victor Amadeus had now known the Contessa long enough to find to his cost that she was a very expensive luxury, and her heavy demands on his generosity were not always to his liking.

Fastidious to a degree, perfection in everything alone satisfied her. This could be seen both in her person and in the decorations and furnishing of her apartments. As an art collector she was insatiable in her wish to possess priceless treasures, and her rooms were a museum of bronzes, cameos, mosaics, and valuable pictures. Prince Eugène's services as a connoisseur on matters relating to art were often put into requisition, and he never came to Turin without either adding to her collection, nor did he fail to tell her of approaching sales of valuable pictures and objects of virtu he had seen in Germany or elsewhere. The Contessa then immediately put herself in communication with the vendors, and, regardless of the prices, obtained the articles specified, for which Victor Amadeus had to pay.

In consequence of these revelations of Madame di Verrua's character, the Duke's affections began to wane, and the duration of his attentions to the

Contessa could only be accounted for as due to force of habit. Moreover, their intimacy was too severely strained by their repeated quarrels to be proof against them. A new source of dispute now arose through the restrictions placed by Victor Amadeus on the Contessa's liberty and independence. With the failing of his passion, his suspicions and want of confidence in her increased, and, greatly to her annoyance, he asserted his claims to authority, and completely hindered her freedom.

If absent from Turin he limited the friends she was permitted to receive, and with the exception of St. Thomas and the Marchese Dronero, but few names were included on the list. When in Turin he watched her with equal vigilance, and all her movements were under his control. Occasionally Victor Amadeus would visit her in the evening, relate the news, and remain to supper, after which the ministers would come in and affairs would be discussed. With the exception of these visits her life was rather monotonous, and not at all suited to a woman whose love for dissipations and frivolities constituted the sole object for existence.

Accustomed to having her own way without restraint, she seriously considered as to the best means of escaping from the Duke's despotic commands, and in 1695, under advice of the doctors, she decided to visit St. Moritz ; besides the advantage of the waters for her health, she looked forward to finding relief for a time from the Duke's severe tutelage.

On hearing that a cure at St. Moritz was considered necessary for the Contessa's health, Victor Amadeus, somewhat to her surprise, raised no objections to the proposal; but without discussion provided the means for her journey, and appointed Comte Robbio and a numerous suite to accompany her. Comte Robbio was specially charged to attend to all the Contessa's requirements, and it also devolved on him to keep the Duke informed of every incident that concerned Madame di Verrua during her absence. It is due to the numerous letters written by the Count to the Duke, or when money was required, to St. Thomas, that facts descriptive of the customs of the day on such a voyage have been preserved.

Greater honour could not have been paid to the Duchess herself in the organisation of Madame di Verrua's voyage: it took the form of a triumphal progress rather than the ordinary occurrence of a private individual going to a cure. Her suite was formed of the highest notabilities of Turin: such names as Doria, de Cirié, de Trivier figured amongst them, the Abbés Perrone and Cumiana, and even the Court physician Rica was put at her service, none of whom were too well pleased at being under the orders of a lady for whom they felt but little sympathy.

The procession of coaches, servants, luggage, and an escort of twelve guards started from Turin on July the 9th; the first bulletin sent by Comte Robbio informed the Duke that "the Contessa had slept

well and would pass the following night at Vercelli." At Milan she was received with almost the same honours as had been shown to the Duke when he resided there on his way to Venice. She was met by Comte Landriani, the envoy to Savoy, and was accompanied by him and a retinue bearing lighted torches to the palace placed at her disposal. The following morning, the Comte related, Madame di Verrua granted an audience to the Marchesa Visconti, one of the greatest ladies of Milan, and after visiting the town she went to the Cathedral and prostrated herself before the relics of St. Charles Borromeo. A magnificent entertainment was held in her honour by Comte Landriani, and the Contessa then started for Como.

At Como the Governor, Conte Antonio Visconti, awaited her arrival with a coach and six ; a salute of cannons and pétards was fired during the drive to the palace, where she found a banquet in readiness for her.

The next day an exciting incident occurred while crossing the lake in a flotilla of barges, many of which were overladen with the horses and coaches. In order to enliven the passage over, the Governor had provided musicians in one of the barges, but unfortunately a violent storm arose when this miniature fleet was but half-way across the lake, and many of the party being seized with panic, the utmost confusion prevailed on board the respective boats. The one laden with provisions foundered, and not with-

out great anxiety and some danger, the Contessa landed on the opposite shore in the grounds belonging to Prince Trivulzio, who came forward to reassure her after all the emotions she had gone through ; he replaced the loss of the provisions by offering her "fish, vegetables, tongues, fruit, and even a magnificent live calf."¹

Wherever Madame di Verrua stopped she met with receptions of a similar description, and all the time she remained at St. Moritz she was the centre of attraction to the visitors who thronged to this health resort.

The first impression conveyed by the Contessa to a new acquaintance was always one of interest. No one was a greater adept in the art of laying herself out to be agreeable when it suited her, and she had cultivated to such an extent personal charm and fascination that it was impossible to resist her captivating ways or to realise the shallowness of her vain nature. At St. Moritz she was particularly in a mood to add new recruits to the ranks of her admirers ; her high spirits at her freedom, and her readiness to take part in all the excursions and amusements of the place, made her more than usually attractive, and so agreeably was the time passed there that she resolved when the moment came to leave St. Moritz, she would pay a second visit the following summer. This she was enabled to do by the generosity of Victor Amadeus. It was during her second absence

¹ *La Comtesse de Verrue*, p. 115.

from Turin that peace, the terms of which were propitious to Savoy, had been declared ; in consequence of which she found on her return in 1696 an improvement in the whole atmosphere of the Court, and everyone, even the Duke, seemed inclined to be more cheerful than she had seen them for a long time. The autumn sped by at Moncalieri in a succession of fêtes, and the addition of several French officers and the Comte de Tessé, the Governor of Pinerolo, lent variety to the small Court circle.

The Comte de Tessé had been a constant visitor at Turin ever since the conclusion of negotiations between France and Savoy, and whilst terms were being transacted he was kept at Turin as hostage. He therefore had had every opportunity of observing and making mental notes of the motive power that worked the machinery of the Duke's Court, and he soon gathered that the Contessa di Verrua would be a most useful agent in letting him peep behind the scenes, by means of which he would gain a clearer conception of the meaning of the Duke's performances, for the most part unintelligible.

The Duke's absence at Nice during the spring of 1697 afforded Tessé occasions of cultivating the Contessa's acquaintance, as, strange to say, Tessé did not fall under the suspicions of Victor Amadeus, and the ex-Governor of Pinerolo was treated with a degree of confidence unusual to the Duke.

Of easy, courteous manners and insinuating ways, Tessé found no difficulty in getting on friendly terms

with Madame di Verrua. She was delighted to have the chance of conversing with a man of the world, who appreciated her wit and encouraged her to talk about herself and her history. She soon made it clear to Tessé that she was weary of the Duke's jealous interference, and resented his claims over her liberty ; were she sure of the reception she would meet with in France, she told him how willingly she would exchange the Court of Turin for that of Versailles.

Tessé listened sympathetically to her grievances against Victor Amadeus, and from the moment that their conversations had become personal, he easily led her on to speak quite openly on many points relating to the Duke's private affairs. The Contessa was so overjoyed at Tessé's assurance that he would prepare the way for her return to France, that in the exuberance of spirits she did not content herself with imparting to Tessé in their interviews all he wanted to know, but she wrote to him as well, and supplemented all she had already told him by any gossip she could think of. A few extracts from the two following letters will show how heedless she was of what she related, provided it helped her own interests with Louis XIV. The first letter, written February 6th, 1697, runs thus :—

“I have carried this little packet in my pocket for the last three days in the hopes of being able to deliver it to you myself, but I see there is nothing to be done save to send it you straight, dangerous though it may be, for reasons I shall give you.

I prefer, however, to run a risk rather than you should think I have forgotten my promise. First of all, you must know that the meddlesome and indiscreet Madame Royale has told the Marquis St. Thomas that I am a great friend of yours, and she also warned him to tell me nothing for fear I would repeat it to you ; this difficulty I daresay I shall overcome, but that is not all. Monsieur, her son, is very displeased that you should have received ladies to dinner and supper during his absence : he is very angry, and has written to the Marquise de Linat to forbid her granddaughter to go, and has also advised her to prevent her daughters from doing so ; you had better therefore give up your suppers. I have been seriously spoken to and warned, not to have any intimacy with you : it is to be regretted, as the order is irrevocable. I want you therefore to understand that though I may change in manners, my sentiments towards you will remain unvarying : what I am doing for you at this moment ought to reassure you. I am longing to devote myself to the King, even though I have never seen him ; but I am French, and in saying that, I say all. Let me now tell you of the journey taken by the Marquis. It has resulted in a promise given by the Emperor, who has agreed to conditions as if he and the Duke were still good friends. H.I.M. also wrote a letter to assure him of his friendship, exhorting and begging the Duke to preserve kind feelings for the House of Austria ; the Emperor further stated he would endeavour to let the Duke see the great interest he takes in all that concerns Savoy. This letter has been

answered by one equally effusive and full of protestations."

Rambling on in this strain, Madame di Verrua closes in saying :—

"Adieu, Monsieur, to-morrow there is the Court ball. If possible, I will speak to you. There is something droll, is there not, that though we are on such good terms we have to appear indifferent to each other? But how can we do otherwise?"¹

In the next letter, written towards the end of the same month, Madame di Verrua does not conceal that her sole anxiety lay in effecting a return to France under most favourable circumstances; and as Tessé had been appointed gentleman-in-waiting to the future Duchesse de Bourgogne, the Contessa felt that everything depended on the way Tessé represented her case to the King. Her wish to assure Louis XIV. of the sincerity of her offer to serve him is expressed in the following words :—

"I expected to have gone to Court to-day, but apparently I was not required; and as I am not sure of being there to-morrow either, it is better that I should write you a few words to tell you how grateful I feel for the assurance you give me that the King does not look upon me as an unfortunate woman, whose right place is the reformatory (*les repenties*), or, as my brother de Chevreuse would have me believe, so worthless and despicable as not

¹ *Négotiations avec la Savoie*, Tessé au Roi.

to merit any consideration. It is not the moment for my justification, but I beg you to speak of my respect and attachment, and also to state that my services to the best of my ability may be counted on. Before you leave we will devise some means for the safety and secrecy of our correspondence; rest assured I will tell you things that may be of advantage to the King just as they are. Every day it will be a matter of greater difficulty, owing to the strict inquiries made on all those I receive. I do not know how, but you have managed to overcome the repugnance that was originally felt when attention was first drawn to your familiarity with us. The Duke told me three days ago that he likes you as much as it is possible for him to like any Frenchman, but that in future he will not permit others of your nationality to know him as well as you do; I therefore strongly advise you to leave as soon as you can, because here it invariably happens that the more one sees one another, the less one is esteemed. As permission has been granted me to see you on affairs relating to my husband, send and ask if I can receive you on Saturday; I will let you know the hour. I have a thousand little things to tell you—too many to write. I suppose you noticed that the Duke and I were sulking at the ball on Tuesday; I begged him to leave me alone and vent his temper elsewhere. I shall go to-morrow to San Giovanni for the sermon. I will try and give you this letter myself; burn it, for if not, you and I may be burnt instead. Adieu. You know my frankness, so you ought to be persuaded that it is not a mere compliment when I assure you that

I hold to your friendship more than to that of any other man in the world ; bear the same sentiments towards me, and be sure that the King will be told, through you, on every matter connected with his interests. This is a very long letter, but it will be the last for some time, and I have some leisure, as Maître Victor is suffering from an abscess on the arm and is confined to his room.”¹

Try to disguise it as she might in expressions of devotion to the King and friendship for Tessé, the absolute selfishness and absence of any feeling of honour is the prevailing sentiment revealed by these letters, copies of which were sent to Louis XIV. Madame di Verrua was so much absorbed by her own interests that she did not even pause to reflect that she was making a confidant of a remarkably astute diplomat, whose *métier* demanded of him that under the semblance of rendering services he should extort from others all the information he required ; and had she seen the light esteem in which Tessé at first held her offer of assistance she might have been less effusive in her repeated protestations of attachment. In a letter to the King dated July 16th, 1690, Tessé shows by the few following words that he had already penetrated her motives and formed a just estimate of her character :—

“To say the truth, judging from her manners, her appearance, her attitude, and even the way she does

¹ Tessé au Roi, *ibid.*

her hair, she seems solely occupied with a wish to please, and I very much doubt if M. de Savoie will have confided to her his secrets.”¹

At a much later date, when Tessé had been afforded ample opportunities for cultivating the Contessa’s acquaintance, his first impressions on her shallow nature seem unchanged, and in writing to the King he says :—

“A woman who has no wish to please would indeed be a rare bird, and as regards the Contessa di Verrua, she has been nearly lost through her vanity to be considered pretty.”²

The Ambassador was unable to give all the time that Madame di Verrua would have wished to her affairs, as, besides the constant letters that passed between the Sovereign and his Ambassador bearing on the question that interested her, Tessé’s voluminous correspondence with the King during the year 1696 had been principally occupied by the many details relating to the marriage of Princess Adélaïde. It had been decided that it should be postponed till she had attained her twelfth year, but meanwhile the Duke had agreed to the King’s desire that her education should be completed in Paris under the direction of Madame de Maintenon.

The pleasure shown by the Duchess at the prospect of a union between her daughter and a Prince of her own House communicated itself to all those round

¹ *Négociations avec la Savoie*, Tessé au Roi.

² *Ibid.*

her. She had regained her former spirits, and seemed to be once more the light-hearted Princess of former years, and so great was her joy, that all her sorrows and anxieties were banished from her mind. Solely engrossed in her child's welfare, she gaily occupied herself with the necessary arrangements. This unexpected happiness had so entirely transformed the Duchess that her habitual prudence deserted her, and Tessé wrote to the King :—

“The Duchess of Savoy cannot repress her great joy, and though she has been reminded not to let the leaders of the Allies see all that she feels, the Princess cannot contain herself, and seizes every occasion to talk to me of your Majesty, of her happiness, and of her past troubles and mortifications.”¹

The Duchess was very anxious to have her father's opinion of Princess Adélaïde, and lost no time in sending him a portrait of her daughter, who was considered to be very like her mother, to whom she bore a further resemblance by her “modest and dignified manners.”² Tessé made a point of observing the Princess minutely, not only as regarded her character, but in reference to her physique ; and though it was not easy to form an opinion of a child of that age, he told the King : “The more I notice the young Princess, the more I am convinced that she is strong and has a good constitution. Whenever I see her

¹ Tessé au Roi, July 20th, 1696, Ministère des Affaires étrangères, folio 47.

² *Anna di Savoia*, p. 182.

she blushes with becoming modesty, as if in seeing me she is reminded of the Duc de Bourgogne.”¹

It was only when the last dispositions had to be taken regarding Princess Adelaide’s departure that drawbacks arose to mar the Duchess’s hopeful expectations for her daughter’s happiness. Bearing in mind how forlorn and lonely she had felt when she had left her own home and all those most dear to her, she was most anxious that her child’s journey should be made under more favourable conditions, and cherished the hope that she herself might be allowed to accompany her to France ; the thoughts of once more seeing her native land and her relations, even for a short space of time, was a further inducement to her to make this suggestion.

Such a proposal was far from being agreeable to Louis XIV. He considered that the presence of the mother would be detrimental to his wish to sever from the Princess’s youthful mind all associations of home, neither would he listen to the wish expressed by the Duchess “that the Princess, a mere baby of eleven years, should be accompanied by a Piedmontese doctor, a governess, and two maids, in order that she should not be isolated from all those who knew her.”²

The Duchess had to dismiss from her mind all thoughts of any concessions.

Louis XIV. announced his intention of advancing as far as Montargis to meet the Princess, and up to

¹ Corres. Savoie, folio 47.

² Tessé au Roi, August 11th, folio 119.

the frontier she would be accompanied by the Principessa della Cisterna, the same lady who twelve years previously had met the Duchess on her arrival in Savoy as the Duke's bride.

On October 7th, 1696, the royal cortège passed out of the palace gates through the densely crowded streets of Turin. The acclamations of the people testified to the Duke's unshaken popularity: as though at one moment it had appeared to be imperilled by the reverses of war, the advantageous terms of peace had entirely dissipated the momentary discontent. In the midst of the cheering and enthusiasm, many of the bystanders were moved to tears at the sight of the bride of such tender years, who responded graciously and gravely to the affectionate demonstrations of her own people; and they felt deep sympathy for the little Princess who was leaving her father's home as a peace-offering.

The Court passed the night at Avigliano, and the next day the child bid farewell to her parents. It was a moment of emotion, both to herself and them, but with a resolution remarkable in one so young, the Princess bore in mind Tessé's injunctions that as future Duchesse de Bourgogne she was not to cry at anything that made her unhappy, and she sent him word "that though she had shed a few tears, she had not forgotten that he had told her she must laugh instead of crying, and she remembered the position she was called on to occupy."¹

¹ *Ibid.*, Tessé au Roi, October 16th, folio 29.

During her journey there had been so many distractions to occupy her thoughts, and the receptions and ceremonies at each stopping-place had so completely tired her out, that there had been no time for childish grief. It was not till she reached the Pont de Beauvoisin and saw the King's coach with the horses' heads turned in the direction of France, waiting for her in the centre of the bridge, that she felt a longing to be going back to her home with the ladies who were allowed to get into the coach to take leave of her. But the King's officers were waiting to be presented, so the leave-taking was hurried on, and she stifled her sobs as she received the gentlemen and "attracted everyone's attention by her nobility of mien, and her delicate complexion and colouring, the more noticeable as it was quite natural."¹

On November 4th the King, according to his promise, was waiting at Montargis to receive her. He assisted her from her coach, conducted her to his rooms, and presented her to the Dauphin, her future father-in-law, to Monsieur, her grandfather, and to other Princes of the royal family. Louis XIV. was most agreeably surprised and pleased at the Princess's whole appearance ; with the eye of one accustomed to analyse, the King was in the habit of forming rapid yet accurate conclusions, and the same evening, within a few hours of meeting the Princess, Louis XIV. revealed his gift of intuition of character in the following

¹ Dangeau's Diary, October 17th, 1696.



MARIA. AD. SAB. PRINC. ÆTA SUE XI. 1697

By gracious permission of H.M. the King of Italy

MARIA ADELAÏDA PRINCESS OF SAVOY AT THE AGE OF 11, 1697

FROM THE PICTURE IN THE QUIRINAL PALACE, ROME

Facing p. 374

letter he wrote to Madame de Maintenon, to whom he always expressed himself without reserve.

“MONTARGIS, *4th November,*
Six in the evening.

“I arrived here before five o'clock, and advanced to meet the Princess. She allowed me to be the first to speak ; she then answered me very naturally, but with a slight embarrassment that would have pleased you. I led her through the crowd to her room : the lighted torches were now and then brought close up to her face, in order that the people should see her. She went through this procession and ceremony with grace and modesty. At last we reached her room, in which the crowd and the heat were almost suffocating. I showed her from time to time to those who approached her, and I considered her on every side to be able to give you my opinion. She has the most graceful and the most beautiful figure that I have ever seen ; the way she is dressed and coiffé is a perfect picture. Her eyes are full of life and very fine, the eyelids admirable ; her skin is as white and delicately coloured as one could wish ; her hair is thick and a lovely shade. She is as thin as a child of her age usually is ; her lips are deep red, though rather thick ; her teeth are white, but too long, and need attention ; the hands are well-shaped, but will improve in colour as she gets older. As far as I have seen, she speaks but little ; still, like a woman who has been used to society, she is not embarrassed when observed. She curtseys badly, and rather in the Italian way—she has also something Italian in her face ; but, all the same, she pleases

the people—I could see that in everyone's expression. As regards myself, I am delighted, and to be frank with you, as I always am, I find her perfect, and I should be sorry were she more beautiful. I repeat that everything is as it should be save the curtsy. I will tell you more after supper, as I shall then notice many things that I have not yet observed. I forgot to say that she is rather shorter than tall for her age."¹

These and similar flattering remarks passed on the Princess by the King furnish the best description of a beauty who, like her grandmother Henrietta, was destined to play a rôle at the Court of France. Even the austere Madame de Maintenon, whose rigid insensibility rarely permitted her to admit any merits in others, could not resist the winning grace of her pupil, and relaxed many of the harsh measures she usually adopted with the young ladies under her care. Such injudicious partiality was a misfortune for the development of Princess Adélaïde's character, as Madame de Maintenon, always jealous lest another should usurp her authority over the King, put on one side all the responsibilities of the trust, and aimed at bringing up the Princess solely as a plaything for Louis XIV. to toy with in the dark hours of advancing old age.

The Duchesse d'Orléans, in her correspondence, frequently refers to the Duchesse de Bourgogne, and threw all the blame of the defects that gradually were

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 194.

to be perceived in her character on Madame de Maintenon. On the other hand, she always rendered justice to the early training bestowed by the Duchess of Savoy on the Princess, of whom she wrote as follows :—

“Her virtuous mother had brought her up with sound principles, and when she arrived in France she had very good manners, but ‘la vieille guenipe’ (*sic*) (Madame de Maintenon), in order to obtain her affections and sole control over her, has allowed the Princess to have her own way in everything, nor has she exercised any restraint over her caprices.”¹

The Duchess of Savoy, who was unaware at the time of the inefficient modes employed in the education of Princess Adélaïde, could not restrain a feeling of maternal pride, and a very natural sense of gratitude, towards Madame de Maintenon on receiving the following words written by her in praise of the Princess :—

“A letter of this sort little suits the respect I owe your Royal Highness, but I believe you will pardon it on account of our excessive joy at the treasure we have received. The Princess need not speak to show us her wit ; her way of listening and all the emotions of her countenance show that nothing escapes her notice. Your Royal Highness will scarcely believe how much the King is delighted with her ; he told me yesterday he had to restrain his feelings lest his

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

happiness should appear too excessive. She begged me to instruct her well in everything whereby she might please His Majesty ; the gay, sweet, and graceful air with which she said this is not to be expressed in a letter.”¹

These numerous proofs of the love and affection being reaped by her daughter were an inexhaustible source of pleasure to the Duchess ; in a great measure they allayed her anxieties and preoccupations on losing her at an age when she still required her mother’s loving care and watchful eye ; but the Duchess never met trouble half-way, and she was sensible enough in this, as in other circumstances, to derive all the pleasure that fell to her lot without marring it by dwelling on the attendant drawbacks.

Just then she was experiencing a succession of happy accidents for which she had been totally unprepared ; and Princess Adélaïde’s marriage was but the precursor to a still more important event for Savoy by the birth of an heir on May 6th, 1699.

The news had been a great relief to the Duke, and not less to the people, who had been anxiously expectant for many years, and they shared with him in the universal feeling of joy. The question of succession had weighed heavily on the Duke’s mind, and he felt that now the responsibilities of administration

¹ *The Descendants of the Stuarts*, p. 139, W. Townend.

would be lighter to him, as he had a son in whom he hoped to inculcate his own love for his people and country, and to bring him up to a life of arduous work. The Court Circular from Turin, in speaking of the happy event, said :—

“The joy is universal both at Court and in the town, and the satisfaction is all the greater on knowing that the Duchess and the young Prince are in perfect health. The day after the child’s birth the Duke of Savoy and the foreign ministers assisted at a *Te Deum* sung in the chapel, and yesterday the French Ambassador was received in audience by the Duke. Illuminations and a display of fireworks have been held here, and His Royal Highness has sent Envoys to the Pope, to the Emperor, to His Most Christian Majesty, as well as to many other Princes, to announce the news. In order to extend to all his subjects the joy that is being felt on the birth of the Prince of Piedmont, the Duke of Savoy has freed all prisoners, save deserters and those whose crimes cannot be pardoned. Madame Royale has distributed alms to all the poor families in the town. She has given the young Prince a cross in diamonds, valued at 15,000 pistoles, and a silver-gilt service to Madame the Duchess. The bishops have arrived to congratulate H.R.H., and the deputies from the provinces have offered the presents customary on such an occasion. The Comte de Vernone, recently named Ambassador at the Court of France, has received orders to leave Turin to take up his post.”¹

¹ *Gazette de France*, Bibliothèque Nationale, May, 1699.

Madame Royale passed most of her time during the next few months in the accomplishment of vows she had made with regard to the Prince's birth. Her religious fervour had been stimulated by this event, and she visited the principal sanctuaries of Piedmont. The following details, relating to one of her pilgrimages, as reported by the *Gazette*, give an idea of the scale on which they were conducted by royal personages in the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth century.

“TURIN, *September 26th*, 1700.

“Madame Royale, the mother of the Duke of Savoy, left here the 13th of this month for Biella, to accomplish a vow at Our Lady of Oropa as a thank-offering for the birth of the Prince of Piedmont. She was accompanied by her entire household, numbering 250 persons. She was received at Biella in the palace of the Marchese Ferrero, where the Marquise de Masseran also arrived the following day. At the commencement of the nine days' devotion Madame Royale and all the ladies of her Court partook of the Communion, and she presented to the church an altar-piece studded with precious stones, valued at 2,000 pistoles. At the conclusion of her retreat on the 25th of the month, she made a donation of a life-size figure in solid gold of the Prince of Piedmont weighing about $7\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. (*‘quinze mares’*), which was his weight when he was born. Madame Royale leaves on the 27th to return here; the Duke and Duchess intend returning also from

Cirié, where they have been during Her Royal Highness' absence. The Duke had slight attacks of fever at the Veneria, but now both he and the Prince of Piedmont are in good health."¹

¹ *Gazette de France.*

CHAPTER V

THE DUKE RETURNS TO HIS OLD ALLIES

The Contessa di Verrua decides to leave Turin—Her brother assists her flight—The loyalty of Victor Amadeus—The passing of the Act of Settlement in England—The Duchess protests uselessly—The death of Charles II. of Spain—Complications arising from his will—The Duke accepts the command of the Franco-Spanish troops in Italy—He is accused of secret intelligence with Austria—Catinat is replaced by Villeroy—His insolence to Victor Amadeus—The marriage of Princess Marie Louise with Philip V.—The King of Spain comes to Italy—The etiquettes of the Spanish Court—Victor Amadeus declares his alliance with the Imperial troops—War with France declared—The siege of Turin—The meeting between the Duke and Prince Eugène on the Superga—The votive offering—Close of hostilities.

IT was generally remarked that the birth of the Prince had led to a renewal of the union, so frequently broken, between the Duke and Duchess, and on this occasion Victor Amadeus showed a more earnest wish than usual to bestow on his wife the affection of which he was so grudging; now, as formerly, the Duchess expanded under his renewed solicitude, and her heart responded to the warmth of his tenderness.

The rapprochement between the Duke and his wife had all the appearance of continuing, and was too obvious not to escape the notice of Madame di Verrua. This new phase of the Duke's mood was a further inducement to her to endeavour to obtain her emanci-

pation. It also happened that while she was deliberating how best she could accomplish the wish that had for so long filled her mind, Tessé had arrived in Turin, the bearer of the Duchesse de Bourgogne's congratulations to her parents on the birth of her brother. From what the Contessa was able to gather from the discreet envoy, he had carried out his promise, and besides enlisting the sympathy of Louis XIV., he had also disposed her relations de Chevreuse and Soubise entirely in her favour. The absence of Madame Royale at Oropa and the Duke and Duchess at Cirié was too favourable an opportunity to be lost, and as all these different incidents seemed to point to success, no better moment would ever be found to effect her evasion. During the winter of the preceding year she had already discussed with her brother, the Chevalier de Luynes, the plan to be adopted relating to her flight. He had undertaken to convey her in safety to France, and helped her to devise a way by which she could remove from Turin the greatest part of her valuable collection. This they were able to accomplish by the assistance of the Chevalier's and her own valets, both of whom took an apartment in Turin, established themselves as art collectors, and, under pretext of having opened commerce with France, all the Contessa's collection was by these means, little by little, transported to Paris without exciting suspicions, and housed there till she should arrive to claim it.

The Chevalier de Luynes had been hiding in Turin

several days before the 4th October, the date decided on for Madame di Verrua's flight. On that day she ordered her carriage at the usual hour, and gave directions to be driven to the château of a friend; on alighting she told her servants that she should return on foot, and dismissed the carriage. As soon as it was out of sight, she joined her brother, who, in disguise, was waiting for her at a cross-road. She also changed her dress, and putting on a man's suit, partly by post-chaise, and partly in a sedan chair, they reached the gates of Fontainebleau four days after their departure from Turin.

All these precautions had been adopted under the presumption that Victor Amadeus would follow the Contessa in close pursuit, and the hot speed in which the journey was undertaken was with a view of gaining some hours over her pursuers. She might, however, have spared herself so many needless emotions, for though Saint Simon states "the flight of Madame di Verrua wounded the Duke to the quick,"¹ after the first sting caused by the ingratitude of the woman who owed to him all she possessed, he felt intense relief that she should have severed a connection that had become intolerable to him. He never would have had the courage to take any decisive step himself, but now that it had been done, he realised what an inconclusive element she had been in his life. He felt that for the first time she had rendered him a very great service, and, therefore, he could afford to be

¹ *Mémoires*, vol. ii. chap. xx.

magnanimous. It was almost a mortification for Madame di Verrua to find that the Duke not only showed no desire that she should return to him, but instead of the vituperations and menaces for which she had already prepared recriminations, he treated her departure with a philosophy akin to indifference. The only signs of his remembrance of her are to be found in his letters to Comte Vernone, in which he begged still to be kept informed of all that concerned the Contessa's interests.

For a certain time she remained at Dampierre, the beautiful property of the de Luynes family, after which she resided chiefly in a convent, till 1704, when, by her husband's death at the battle of Blenheim, she found herself entire mistress of her actions.

This absolute freedom for which she had pined so long was the signal for the abandonment of the convent, and under protection of the Court and her own relations, she gave herself up to the unrestrained enjoyment of life in Paris.

Some idea of the luxury in which she lived may be formed from the inventory of the auctions, rich with the spoils from Turin, that took place after her death in 1736. Details on this subject and other information regarding Madame di Verrua are given in the invaluable biography, well worth the perusal of readers interested in the strange career of this lady, from which so much assistance has been gathered for the present work.¹

¹ *La Comtesse de Verrue*, G. de Lérès. Paris, 1881.

A certain amount of correspondence was kept up between the Duke and herself till 1703. Though he had suspicions of her disloyalty towards him, these suspicions were not clearly proved till the political situation between Louis XIV. and himself became again troubled; then only was the Duke persuaded that she had betrayed him to the King. After 1703 her name seldom occurs in the Duke's history, and save for an occasional reference to her, bearing on political news, she died out of the Duke's life a long time previous to her death.

During the years 1700-1 there were many signs to show that a renewal of complications was to be feared, and it needed all the Duke's concentration of thought to devise means to enable him to steer clear of shoals.

The death of the Duke of Gloucester in July, 1700, the last survivor of Queen Anne's numerous family, turned the attention of the English ministers as to the necessity of assuring a Protestant successor to the throne of England. William III. on the meeting of Parliament on February 10th, 1701, in his speech bearing on the nation's loss by the Duke's death, stated that further provision in regard to the succession in the Protestant line was absolutely essential to guarantee the interests and safety of England. The majority concurred with these sentiments, the King was supported by the House in the steps he proposed to take in order to ensure the preservation of the Protestant religion, and the Act

of Settlement, passed in 1689, was accordingly confirmed. By this Act the legitimate rights of the son of James II. and the grandchild of Charles I. were both equally put on one side, though the claims of the Duchess of Savoy, failing the acknowledgment of the rights of James III., as being next in blood, could not be disputed. The succession reverted to the Protestant line of the descendants of James I. and was assigned to his granddaughter, the Electress Sophia, and her Protestant descendants. The Electress was at that time seventy-one years of age, and had never been in England.

It was seldom that the Duchess of Savoy lost time in futile protestations, but on this occasion she warmly advocated her cause, and was determined that such an unjust decision should not come into force without her proving the illegality of the Act. She gave orders to Count Maffei, her Ambassador at the Court of St. James', to protest against the resolution passed by Parliament, and as daughter of Henrietta of England she represented her indisputable rights to the throne after the death of William III. and Princess Anne of Denmark. Maffei obeyed the orders given him and sent a copy of this protest to both Houses of Parliament. The two gentlemen who were charged by Maffei with this commission were accompanied by a public notary to attest to the delivery of the documents, but no notice was taken of the protestation. The death of James II. at St. Germain followed closely on the Act that excluded

in perpetuity the Stuart claimants to the throne of Great Britain.¹

On April 6th, 1701, the Duke's second son was born, and received the name of Charles Emmanuel. The Prince's birth coincided with this question of succession in England, and recalled to the mind of Victor Amadeus the former proposition instigated by William III. of educating one of the Princes of Savoy in England as a Protestant with a view to his possible succession to the throne ; but this proposal had been made previous to 1696, when, induced by the restoration of Pinerolo to Savoy, Victor Amadeus went over to the French side. William III. was in no present mood to be reminded of promises made prior to the Duke's breach with his allies.²

These negative results to re-establish friendly terms with England vexed the Duke all the more, as he was far from experiencing any satisfaction from his alliance with France. Since the treaty between the two countries was framed Louis XIV. had made it evident that he considered his authority over the destinies of Piedmont had increased, owing to the concessions he had conferred on Savoy. These pretensions were shown with greater clearness during the last days of

¹ Smollet's continuation, Hume's *History of England*, vol. i. p. 401.

² Luttrell comments on this incident in the following words : "The Lord Keeper and the Speaker of the House of Commons have had letters delivered them by persons pretending they brought them from the Duke of Savoy, wherein he asserts his son's rights to the Crown of England, and protests against the Bill in favour of the Princess of Hanover" (*State Affairs*, vol. v. p. 33, Luttrell).

Charles II., the weak King of Spain, and his death had barely occurred before signs of a general upheaval disclosed the warlike aspect of affairs all over Europe.

In the will wrested from the dying King by Louis XIV. only a few days before his death, the Dauphin's second son, Philippe, Duc d'Anjou, was named the successor of Charles II., in default of whom the crown of Spain was to devolve on the Duc de Berri, brother of the Duc d'Anjou. The Archduke Charles of Austria, and lastly the Duke of Savoy, were specified next in succession; it was clearly understood that the throne of Spain could never be united to those of either France or Austria. No sooner was the will made public than the simmering contents in the cauldron of antagonistic interests boiled over, and the Emperor did not delay showing his intention of contesting a throne to which, by parentage, he could claim rights equal to those asserted by France. The crisis was likely to prove very critical, and Victor Amadeus, perceiving that it would be impossible for him to remain neutral in the midst of so many conflicting interests, decided that it was not the moment to effect an open rupture with France, as he would be exposed to the ravages of the French troops should the Milanese States fall into their hands.

The Duke therefore accepted the command of the Franco-Spanish troops in Italy, and agreed to the proposal made by Louis XIV. that his second daughter, Maria Luisa Gabriella, should marry the Duc d'Anjou, who ascended the throne of Spain as Philip V. By

this stroke of policy Louis XIV. considered he would bind Victor Amadeus to still closer obligations towards the House of Bourbon, and hinder any negotiations he might otherwise be meditating with the Emperor. Victor Amadeus was not deceived as to the motives that dictated these plausible offers. Costa de Beauregard delineates the situation in the following lines :—

“He had no reason to be satisfied by the price offered for his alliance. This price was the illusory title of Generalissimo of the French and Spanish troops during the war, and the marriage of his second daughter with the young Duc d’Anjou. No predecessor of Louis XIV. had so openly professed the maxim that it was sufficient to pay the services of the House of Savoy by the restitution of a few places taken from her during campaigns, or by marriages that multiplied ties of blood without entailing any consequences. By such means France kept her chained to her side, and prevented her aggrandisement as far as lay in her power.”¹

The outbreak of hostilities succeeded with such precipitation the lively diplomatic discussions arisen on the will of Charles II., that there was no time for the Duke’s deliberation, and he found himself involved in the coalition with France and Spain against England, Austria, and Holland.

Prince Eugène, at the head of 30,000 Imperial

¹ *Mémoires sur la Maison de Savoie*, C. de Beauregard, vol. iii. p. 56.

troops, entered Italy with the intention of taking possession of the Milanese States.

The Duke of Savoy, as Commander-in-Chief of the French and Spanish armies, had the Prince of Vaudemont and Maréchal Catinat under his orders, but instead of coming at once to take the command, he delayed his arrival so repeatedly under one pretext or another, that at the very opening of hostilities Catinat "suspected the Duke of betrayal to France."¹

This suspicion became a certainty when he observed that the Imperial troops were allowed to cross the Adige, and were victorious at Carpi, and when the Duke put in an appearance, he was so dilatory in his movements that Catinat had no longer any doubts that Victor Amadeus secretly informed Prince Eugène on the disposition of the troops, for, as he argued, "it was not natural that the armies of the two crowns, 70,000 strong, should have to retire before 30,000 Imperial troops." The Maréchal had no fear to express his opinion openly, and one day at a Council of War he looked the Duke in the face, and said before all the generals assembled, "Not only is Prince Eugène kept informed on all the movements of our army, on the strength of the battalions and their destination, but he is always acquainted of every project discussed in Council."²

Information of these charges against the Duke was communicated to Louis XIV., but as the services of

¹ *Mémoires de Catinat*, vol. iii. p. 89.

² *Ibid.*, p. 92.

Savoy were just at that time of invaluable importance to France, the King decided to sacrifice Catinat, and in terms of bitter reproach to the general who had hitherto so largely enjoyed royal favour, he announced that the Maréchal de Villeroi would succeed him in command. Unjust as was the King's behaviour towards a general whose long military career had been devoted to the interest of France, in this moment of impending disgrace Catinat still showed his love for his country's honour. He replied submissively to the King's orders, but craved His Majesty's permission to be allowed to serve under the Maréchal de Villeroi, and swore that he would willingly put all the knowledge he possessed at the King's disposal.¹

In a letter addressed by Catinat to his brother, he wrote in much the same strain :—

“I will stake my life in order to re-establish the reputation of the armies of the two crowns fighting in Italy. The glory that the Maréchal de Villeroi may acquire gives me no offence, not only because I believe him to be an honest man and a friend of mine, but also because whatever success he obtains is inseparable for the good and profit of His Majesty's service.”²

The conduct of Villeroi by no means responded to these expressions of generosity on the part of Catinat. The situation was made worse rather than improved by his arrival. His insolence led to his being detested by the whole army, his airs of superiority over Catinat

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

² *Ibid.*, p. 110.

were as reprehensible as was his gross familiarity towards the Duke, whom he always pointedly addressed as "Monsieur de Savoie."

An anecdote, illustrating the familiarity with which he treated Victor Amadeus, relates that one day when the Duke was engaged in conversation with his staff, he opened his snuff-box and took a pinch of snuff. Villeroi, who was close to the Duke, without a word of apology, stretched out his hand and also took a pinch. The colour rose to the Duke's cheeks, and throwing the whole contents of the box on the ground, in a voice in which his indignation could be discerned, he gave orders that the box should be refilled, after which he turned to the officers and continued the conversation as if nothing had taken place. The Maréchal was left to hide his mortification as best he could.¹

This vain and inept general was responsible for the catastrophe to the Franco-Spanish troops at Chiari, the engagement having been undertaken by him against all advice of those versed in military matters. The crowning act of Villeroi's deplorable career in Italy occurred at Cremona, February 1st, 1702. His troops had occupied it for winter quarters, but so little attention was given to the protection of the town that Prince Eugène was enabled to enter it by night, and took possession of it without the French troops being aware of the presence of the enemy until the following dawn. They lost no time in making

¹ *Mémoires de Saint Simon*, vol. iii. p. 76.

amends for their negligence, and the Imperial troops were assailed with such pertinacity and courage that they were obliged to retire, but took with them all the prisoners, and amongst others, the Maréchal de Villeroi. The loss of the general put the whole army in good spirits, and he supplied the theme for many epigrams, the most popular of which, gaily sung by the soldiers, runs as follows :—

“ Français, rendons grâces à Bellone,
Notre bonheur est sans égal ;
Nous avons conservé Crémone
Et perdu notre Général.”¹

The Duc de Vendôme, a man of very different bearing, replaced Villeroi as commander of the troops in Italy.

Whilst Victor Amadeus was away, the Duchess for the fourth or fifth time occupied the position of Regent, and all the arrangements connected with the marriage of Princess Maria Luisa were left entirely in her hands. As was always the case when the Duke was fighting, she lived in a state of perpetual anxiety ; and when she heard that at the battle of Chiari his horse had been killed under him and his uniform riddled with bullets, she was terribly upset, and wrote to the Marquis de St. Thomas, “ I tremble at the danger recently incurred by H.R.H. We must thank Providence that no harm befell him, and only his uniform was touched.” Besides her agitation on the

¹ *Mémoires sur la Maison de Savoie*, Appendix, p. 405.

perils to which Victor Amadeus was exposing himself, the Duchess had the additional sorrow of hearing of her father's death that had taken place June 9th, 1701. Though father and daughter had never met since the day she left France at the age of fifteen, they had been in almost daily correspondence, and if unpopular with others the Duc d'Orléans was loved by his two daughters, to both of whom he had always shown himself an affectionate father. He also had been the closest tie that still connected the Duchess with France, for staunch and loyal though she was to Victor Amadeus, to whom she had remained constant and true in the inexcusable treatment he had received from Louis XIV., still the Fatherland of her girlhood held a place in her heart, and she often sighed as she thought she would never see it again.

On this occasion, as on others affecting herself personally, the Duchess had no leisure to dwell on her own pleasures or sorrows : the Marchese di Castel-Rodriguez, the Envoy from Spain, had arrived to pay homage to his future young Sovereign, and had been appointed to convey her to Spain, where Philip V. awaited his bride.

The marriage ceremony by proxy quickly succeeded the reception of the Envoy. It took place in the Chapel of the Sudario, and was not by any means an animated scene. The whole Court was dressed in mourning for the Duc d'Orléans, which added to the sombre attire of the household. The Duchess, to whom pleasure was not to be thought of without her

husband being present, on seeing his vacant chair could not pretend to cheerfulness she did not feel. The Duke's deaf and dumb uncle, the old Prince de Carignan, now getting very infirm, gave away the bride in the absence of his nephew, and on September 12th, 1701, the Princess set out on her long voyage.¹

Judging from the letters that passed between mother and daughter, this parting was a far harder trial to the Duchess than the separation from the Duchesse de Bourgogne. The Queen of Spain was thirteen when she left her home, two years older than Princess Adélaïde at the time of her marriage. Consequently she had been more of a companion to her mother, who save for the interest afforded her by the two boys was left very lonely without the Princesses. The only compensation for the loss of Maria Luisa was to be gathered from her happy letters, and such they were because, fortunately, the Queen found qualities in Philip of Anjou in which by others he had always been considered to be lacking, and she was not only an affectionate wife, but proved of great help to him in moments of political stress.

A few months after his marriage, Philip V. gained the conviction that proofs of his personal valour would stimulate his troops in Italy to fight with all the greater zeal and ardour, and he determined to proceed there and make himself known to his Italian subjects.

Maria Luisa was overjoyed at the prospect of

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 233.

seeing her parents again, as Philip was too much in love with his young wife to contemplate leaving her alone in Spain, and in the following letter she wrote to her mother she expresses her confidence in accompanying him.

“Philip has written to Louis XIV., and I am fully persuaded he will give his permission for the journey to Italy. He has shown me the letter he wrote to the King, the concluding lines of which give me the most pleasure, for he says he wishes that I should go with him, as the affection he bears me would make it hard that we should so soon be separated. I beg you, my dearest Mama, not to breathe a word of this to anyone, as I should not like it to be known that I write to you on such things (*January 9th, 1702*).”¹

The Queen of Spain's assurance that Louis XIV. would agree to her husband's request was unfortunately premature. At first the King of France appeared to be willing to the proposal, but he retracted on reflecting that should Philip be accompanied by his wife and the Court, he would not attend seriously to the war, and the expense would be considerably increased, as he could not allow the Court of Spain to be represented in a foreign country save with great pomp.

Louis XIV. was further supported in his final decision by the consternation of the Spaniards, who, on hearing that both the King and the Queen were

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 247.

leaving Spain, expressed fears lest Italy should prove so attractive to them that neither would ever return ; they therefore rejoiced when Louis XIV. solved the question by requesting the Queen to officiate as Regent during her husband's absence.¹

Thus shorn of the principal part of its interest, the visit of Philip V. was a matter not merely of indifference to Victor Amadeus, but of annoyance. The prospect of seeing his son-in-law afforded him but little satisfaction, inasmuch that while Philip was in Italy, he, the Generalissimo, would have to occupy a second place. Rumours also of the rigid ceremonials insisted on by the Spanish Court roused his aggressive mood and predisposed him to meet Philip with feelings of antipathy.

The meeting took place at Acqui. The Duke advanced on horseback and, as the King of Spain left his carriage, Victor Amadeus got off his horse and father and son-in-law embraced each other effusively. That was by far the simplest part of the ceremony, for as Spanish etiquette forbid the Sovereign to be seated in a carriage with anyone of lower rank to himself, the first difficulty at once presented itself. This obstacle Philip, however, condescended to waive, but when, in order to talk over affairs, he found two armchairs of precisely the same size placed side by side for himself and his father-in-law, the Spanish Master of Ceremonies indignantly removed one of them, and the Duke was kept standing during the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

interview. It was in vain that Victor Amadeus asserted that he had been accorded the rights of crowned heads, his representations were unavailing. A dinner had been arranged in honour of the royal guest that same evening, but Victor Amadeus angrily excused himself on the plea of illness, and the next day returned to Turin.

Philip V. witnessed the battle of Luzzara, gained by the Duc de Vendôme, and having satisfied himself that the campaign was progressing advantageously for the Franco-Spanish troops, he returned to Spain, and with these easily acquired laurels received the honour and glory due to his generals.

All this arrogance and affectation shown by both kings was more than Victor Amadeus could endure, and he made but little mystery of the impatience he felt to be free of the obligation he had incurred with France and Spain. Fortunately he had only bound himself to offer them his assistance for two years, he therefore argued he could not be accused of a breach of faith if at the conclusion of that time he should refuse to renew the alliance.

He had not long to wait for an occasion to precipitate a rupture, as his refusal to grant further troops for the bombardment of Trent was seized as a pretext by Louis XIV. to order the Piedmontese troops under the command of the Duc de Vendôme to be disarmed and the officers to be made prisoners of war. But in consideration of the courage they had shown on all occasions, they were not required to give up their

swords ; strange to say, he also ordered the men to be incorporated into the French regiments.¹

Louis XIV. felt such anger on the prospect of again losing the Duke of Savoy's services that he went so far as to issue an order for the arrest of Victor Amadeus, and expressed a great desire to hear of his imprisonment in a French fortress, but happily he was too well guarded by his loyal retainers to run any so serious a risk.

After the disarming of the Piedmontese troops, Louis XIV. had written the following imperious lines to the Duke :—

“MONSIEUR,—I perceive that neither religion, honour, nor your own signature are any guarantee ; wherefore I send my cousin, the Duc de Vendôme, to inform you of my wishes : he will give you twenty-four hours to decide.”

In his reply to the King, Victor Amadeus adopted the same tone as had been addressed to him, and limited his answer to the same number of lines.

“SIRE,—I am not intimidated by menaces. Concerning the unworthy proceedings used towards my troops, I shall take such steps best suited to me. I can give no further explanation and refuse to listen to any proposals.”²

And so Victor Amadeus found himself again at war with France.

¹ *Mémoires sur la Maison de Savoie*, vol. iii. p. 61.

² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

The Duc de Vendôme, even before this interchange of despatches between the Sovereign and the man whom he appeared to look on as his vassal, had been given orders to reduce the places so long coveted by Louis XIV., Vercelli, Verrua, and Turin, and not without some concern Victor Amadeus saw that, as he was then placed, he was deficient in numbers to stand against his powerful enemy; besides the loss of the six thousand troops compelled to disarm, over fifteen hundred were invalided in the hospitals at Cremona. But again in this moment of distress the people rallied to the assistance of their beloved Prince, all the townsfolk responded to his call, and old retired soldiers eagerly asserted their claims to be once more enlisted for service.

The opening of hostilities in 1704 went against Savoy. Susa and Vercelli quickly fell into the enemy's hands, and the loss of those places was followed by the fall of Ivrea and Verrua. This important place offered heroic opposition for over two months, but had finally to surrender after the Governor had blown up the fortifications and bastions. It was at this famous siege of Verrua, from October to December 26th, that the Duke, who had never left his post, owing to the intense cold and the many privations, suffered greatly in his health, lost nearly all his hair, and remained almost completely bald for the rest of his life.¹

Emboldened by success, the invading army con-

¹ Carutti, p. 256.

centrated all their energies on Turin, and Victor Amadeus waited with visible anxiety for the assistance promised him by Joseph I., who had succeeded Leopold I., in 1705, as Emperor of Austria.

Having foreseen what was now to happen, night and day, for many months, Victor Amadeus worked at the defence of Turin, and when, on June 3rd, 1706, the booming of the cannon announced the opening of operations, Victor Amadeus had the confidence of being as well prepared for the attack as, with the men at his disposal, it was possible to be. At the same time as the enemy opened fire, a delegate from the Duc de la Feuillade, who directed the operations, presented himself before the Duke and offered him passports for the conveyance of the Princesses to a place of safety : he also produced an order from the King of France to prohibit firing on H.R.H.'s quarters ; the Duc de la Feuillade therefore requested to be informed as to which part of the town the Duke had decided to inhabit. In reply to these courtesies Victor Amadeus said that as long as the siege lasted his quarters would be wherever he thought his presence would be of the greatest service, and in reference to the passport he need not trouble His Majesty, for as he was master over one of the gates the Princesses could leave the town whenever they thought it advisable to do so.¹

On the same day as the bombardment commenced all the royal family took part in the procession of

¹ *Mémoires sur la Maison de Savoie*, p. 77.

Corpus Domini, and thus encouraged the citizens in their loyalty, and inspired them to follow the example of the Duke, whose presence of mind and calm resoluteness were a most powerful stimulant against pain or depression.

It was necessary, however, that the Duchess should leave without delay, as, in spite of the assurances offered by the King, the bullets seemed specially directed against the palace, and continued to rain in that direction of the town all the time she was making preparations for her departure. The Duke, who had at first intended that the Duchess, the two children, and Madame Royale should remain at Cherasco during the siege of Turin, was soon convinced of the necessity of providing them with a retreat of greater security, and decided that they should avail themselves of the hospitality of the Republic of Genoa. In consequence of this deliberation, after passing a week at Cherasco they left for Mondovi, where they were lodged in the bishop's palace, and during the day and a half spent there, Madame Royale went on a pilgrimage to the sanctuary of the Madonna di Vico in order to invoke "strength and protection for the long journey before her."¹ No doubt it was a long and tedious process, as the repeated wars had reduced all the roads to an almost impassable state, and most of the way sedan chairs or the option of being carried in the bearer's arms were the only possible means of transport. It took six weeks to

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 285.

arrive at the journey's end, and the royal party were thankful for the repose offered them in the palace at Multedo, on the outskirts of Genoa, that had been fitted up for their reception.

Here the little Court had to remain till September, but long before that time the Duchess eagerly waited for the Duke's order for their return to Turin. Save the distraction of visiting monasteries, she had no resources to rouse her from great depression of spirits, for which Madame Royale was largely responsible, as she still maintained her attitude of defiance towards her daughter-in-law, and made her feel in many ways her annoyance that she as reigning Duchess should have precedence over her. These jealousies were all the more painful to Duchess Anna, as, through no fault of hers, with the best will in the world it was a state of affairs she could not alter. Troubles seemed accumulating on her from every side. Always anxious on the Duke's account, she had learnt that her brother, the Duc d'Orléans, had been wounded at the siege of Turin, and the news from Spain was far from reassuring, for the latest to hand announced the advance of the Archduke Charles on Madrid.

The siege of Turin had proceeded for over four months, during which time Victor Amadeus did not confine his attentions to the interior of the town only. Every day he sallied forth, and with a little band of infantry and dragoons scoured the country, with the purpose of distracting the Duc de la Feuillade's attention from the siege, whose chief endeavour was to make

the Duke prisoner, for he knew if he could achieve such a master-stroke Turin would be in his power. Victor Amadeus gave no rest to his pursuer : from Moncalieri he was tracked to Carignano, from Carignano to Carmagnola, and finally was reported to have been seen in the mountains near Saluzzo and Coni ; but though the chase was close and animated the Duke always slipped from his pursuers, and he was never captured.

The beginning of August these flying excursions had to come to an end, as the enemy had been strongly reinforced, and thus the difficulty of exit from Turin was increased.

Provisions were getting very scarce, illness had declared itself in many quarters of the town, and the Duke impatiently awaited the arrival of Prince Eugène, who alone could save the situation that was becoming desperate. This precarious state of affairs lasted till August 28th ; the 40,000 French troops guarding the Adige and the Po had necessitated a complicated manœuvre before the Imperial troops could cross the rivers. On that day the looks of the anxious, worn-out citizens were all directed to the hill of Superga, which it was well known was to be the trysting-place of the Duke and Prince Eugène. The two Princes met under the porch of the little chapel of the Madonna delle Grazie, and here in this solemn moment of expectation and uncertainties, Victor Amadeus, as he gazed at the large French army in the plains below and saw the difficulties by

which he was beset, made a vow before the altar of the Madonna that should he be victorious he would build a lasting monument on that spot where he stood, as a mausoleum for his family and descendants. On September 7th the 40,000 French troops were completely routed, and Turin was liberated. On the same day the Duke and Prince Eugène entered Turin together to the sound of cannons, the pealing of bells, and the enthusiastic shouts of the people, while gratitude rose in the Duke's heart to the Madonna delle Grazie, for having liberated his people from their oppressors.

The magnificent mausoleum that dominates Turin is a fitting memorial to the patriotic valour of the sons of Savoy. The work of levelling the ground was commenced in 1715, and the first stone of the building was laid two years later. The untold difficulties of carrying to completion such a noble conception will be realised by those who know the steep slopes of the Superga. The marble, bricks, stones, all the material for its construction, even to the sand and water, as there was but one stream on the hillside, had to be transported on the backs of mules, and even in 1731, when the basilica was open to the public, it was not completed.

Thus closed a memorable epoch in the annals of the House of Savoy and of Piedmont, as the constancy and energy of Victor Amadeus and the unlimited loyalty of his subjects, which in the personality of Pietro Micca¹ passed to posterity, gave to the little

¹ Appendix A.



*From an oil painting by Conte Luigi Balbo in the Church of Santa Cristina, Turin
Obtained by Barone A. Manno*

VICTOR AMADEUS AND PRINCE EUGÈNE ON THE HEIGHTS OF
SUPERGA, 1706

THE DUKE MAKES A VOW TO ERECT A BASILICA

Facing p. 406

dukedom and her reigning family the importance and position that have enabled them to rule over all Italy and to rank with great nations. As stated by a contemporary political writer, "had Turin fallen, Piedmont would have ceased to exist; in losing Turin, Louis XIV. lost Italy as well."¹ With the liberation of Turin and the overthrow of the French army, Victor Amadeus re-entered into possession of all the towns and fortresses that had been taken from him. He and Prince Eugène gained further victories in the Milanese States. Novara opened her gates to them, and they partly took possession of Milan, though the Castle did not surrender till 1707. The Duke and the Prince next made an expedition into Provence, which, though not entirely successful, was compensated for by the occupation of Susa that had remained in the hands of the French.

The war proceeded in a desultory way for the next four years, but though it dragged on, the spirit of the French troops was broken, and Victor Amadeus gained a period of comparative repose till 1713, the year of the most important change of any in his life.

¹ *Mémoires sur la Maison de Savoie*. Appendix, p. 405. C. de Beauregard.

CHAPTER VI

THE KING AND QUEEN OF SICILY

The Duke's attentions to his wife—Her pleasure on the termination of the campaigns—The death of the Dauphin followed by the tragedy relating to the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne—Rumours as to the cause—The Peace of Utrecht—Queen Anne shows her interest in the affairs of Savoy—Her testimonies of goodwill towards the Duke—The cession of Sicily to Savoy through the Queen's exertions—The Duke's instructions to his Ambassador in Paris—Renewed friendship with his Stuart relations—Correspondence between the Duchess and her daughter on Spanish etiquettes—Victor Amadeus proclaimed King of Sicily at Turin—The departure for Sicily—The stormy voyage—The reception on the arrival of the Court—The solemn entry into the town—The Coronation—Descriptions of the ceremonies attendant on the function—The King occupies himself to improve the conditions of the country—His popularity—Suspensions arise on the length of his stay—The jealousy of the Sicilians—The death of the Queen of Spain—The great grief of the King and Queen—The voyage to Messina—The King's decision to return to Turin—Discontent of the people—The embarkation of the Sovereigns—The improvements made under the reign of Victor Amadeus—He appoints Maffei Viceroy.

THIS prospect of a termination to campaigns in which the Duke was so frequently called to take part was a matter of inexpressible rejoicing to the Duchess. Greatly as she admired the heroism and courage of her husband, she also suffered intensely at the dangers he incurred. It was therefore with sincere relief that she welcomed a period of repose, and she recovered some tranquillity of mind on being assured that the fighting after 1706 was but the last feeble

sparks of dying embers. The Duchess was all the more anxious to have Victor Amadeus home again, as during his rapid excursions to Turin between his battles and victories, by his behaviour towards her, she had felt that her home life was at last assuming the intimate nature for which she had always longed.

A great change had lately come over the Duke ; this might be attributed partly to the departure of the Contessa di Verrua, and partly to his hard-fought campaigns. The hardships he had gone through and the scenes he had witnessed had to a great extent sobered him, and whilst still maintaining all his former vitality and unflinching determination of endeavour, yet certain of his rough characteristics were modified, and both by words and deeds he showed his earnest desire to devote himself to his wife.

The Duke and Duchess were now seldom apart : he seemed to dislike doing anything save when accompanied by her. If he went to the Veneria she had to go also, and Madame Royale delighted the Queen of Spain by telling her that her father and mother always came together when they paid her a visit, which formerly had never been the case. Young though she was when she left her home, Marie Louise had known the grief it had been to her mother of having lost the Duke's affection, and the Princess had often tried to make amends for what was lacking on his part by bestowing childish caresses on her mother, and pleasing her in every way she could. When her

grandmother reported the improvement in the Duke's relations with the Duchess, the Queen of Spain wrote a long letter on the subject to Madame Royale, and said, "Nothing gives me more pleasure than to hear that my mother is treated as she deserves."

Moved by a feeling of gratitude at the consideration he showed her, the Duchess exerted herself in every possible way to agree to the Duke's requests on all occasions, and when he announced his intention of bringing Madame di Verrua's daughter to Court, she not only offered no opposition, but made up her mind to show her no grudge, and to receive the girl in a fitting way. The early years of Mademoiselle di Susa had been passed in the Convent of the Visitation at Pinerolo. Her education was now completed, and by order of the Duke, the Baronne de Choix was appointed her *dame de compagnie*, and, in a coach and six, fetched her from the monastery; the same evening that she arrived in Turin she was conducted to the royal palace, where she received an affectionate welcome from their Royal Highnesses, and found a suite of rooms had been prepared for her use.¹

It was well for the Duchess that the period of long estrangement from the Duke had changed to one of peace and quiet happiness, as she needed his sympathy and support in a moment of deep sorrow that befell her by the totally unexpected death of the Duchesse de Bourgogne in 1712.

The death of the Dauphin, April 14th, 1711, was

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 312.

the first of the consecutive tragedies that plunged the Court of Versailles into mourning. The Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne had succeeded but a few months to the position of Dauphin and Dauphine when, amidst general consternation, their deaths occurred within eight days of each other, followed by that of the little Duc de Bretagne. Something of the nature of a panic ran through the Court of Versailles at these sudden and unaccountable catastrophes, and the King was so crushed by the shock that it was doubted if he would ever recover. Wild stories were circulated, and many improbable suggestions hazarded as to the cause of the disasters, and the Duc d'Orléans, the future Regent, was pointed at as having been concerned in these mysterious deaths. Madame indignantly contested these serious charges brought against her son, and maintained that the Duchess's death was due to an acute form of scarlet fever, and she stated her conviction that the Dauphin simply succumbed to grief on the loss of his wife. In order to add weight to her staunch denial of the slur cast on the Duc d'Orléans, Madame was never tired of repeating that the Dauphine's death in her twenty-seventh year had been cast by horoscope many years before at Turin, when she was still a child, and that Princess Adélaïde was so convinced herself that she would not survive the years allotted to her that she often referred to it to her husband, and even asked him one day whom he would marry after her death, to which he replied that should such a catastrophe ever occur, not eight

days would pass before he followed her to the tomb.¹ Nevertheless, when the doctors affirmed that the same unmistakable traces of poison had been found in the body of the Duc de Bretagne as in those of his parents, Madame's protestations lost much of their credit.

The stupor produced on the Duke and Duchess of Savoy by the fatal news at first almost deadened the sharp edge of grief. It was only little by little, as the unhappy mother received unanimous evidences how irreparable to the Court of France was the loss of her daughter, that she was roused from her apathy and felt the full force of the blow. Added to this was the horror that her stepbrother's name should be mentioned as implicated in the dire disaster. This tragic news affected the whole Court at Turin and cast deep depression over everyone. The Duke had been equally stunned by the terrible tragedy, and shared in his wife's overwhelming sorrow ; but whilst the Duchess had no distraction to hinder her from brooding over her loss Victor Amadeus was compelled to bury his domestic troubles, and had to fix his attention on the current of agitation that vibrated anew through Europe on the death of the Emperor Joseph I., in April of the same year, and was liable to lead to grave consequences. It was reported at Versailles that the Duke's grief was so profound on this occurrence that he shut himself up in his room all one day, to mourn his ally ; but Madame de Maintenon, who never let a chance slip to deteriorate

¹ Lettres de Madame, *Anna di Savoia*, p. 333.

from the most sincere motives of others, sarcastically remarked that no feelings of sorrow had dictated the Duke's wish for seclusion, but the more practical consideration that by doing so he would be able to reflect at his leisure on the most advisable plan to pursue.¹

The death of the Emperor disqualified the Archduke from any claims to the throne of Spain; Joseph I. had left no sons, the Archduke Charles therefore succeeded the late Emperor to the throne of Austria, and all the other powers agreed that in no case could the union of the throne of Spain to the formidable Empire of Austria be contemplated. Louis XIV. was getting old, and though had he listened to his instincts of insatiable ambition he would have chosen to end his days fighting, yet a longing for peace asserted its more imperative claims and induced him to contribute his powerful aid to a desirable solution of a question involving the prosperity of all countries. This feeling for a pacific agreement was sincerely shared by all the other powers, with the exception of the Archduke Charles, who, under the title of Charles VI., had succeeded his brother to the Imperial throne, and he showed his firm intention to oppose resistance to his required renunciation of the crown of Spain.

This presumption on the part of the newly crowned Emperor gave matter for thought to the ministers of other countries, and brought about the concluding negotiations resulting in the Peace of Utrecht, previous to which Louis XIV., to strengthen his hand,

¹ *Mémoires de Catinat*, vol. iii. p. 395.

entered into secret arrangements with Great Britain. Hitherto the King of France had looked on Queen Anne in the light of a usurper, therefore she was never called otherwise than Queen Anne by the French, the widow of James II. was alone considered as Queen of England. But now, while still affording protection to James as James III., Louis XIV. saw that Anne was the principal factor in the solution of a most complicated situation, and in view of obtaining her powerful support, the King in December, 1711, had officially designated her as Queen of Great Britain. Dangeau in his Journal says in reference to this change of the King's policy, "Orders have been issued that Queen Anne is no longer to be spoken of in those terms, but as Queen of Great Britain."¹

As a consequence of the King's desire to effectuate a friendly understanding with England, Louis XIV. also modified to a great extent his mode of procedure with the Duke of Savoy. The consideration shown to the Duke by Queen Anne had not escaped the King's observation. He therefore dropped the supercilious tone he generally adopted with Victor Amadeus, and in his correspondence with the Duke after the conclusions for peace were drawn up he addressed him in the following friendly terms:—

"May 7th, 1713, from MARLY.

"MY BROTHER,—It gives me great pleasure to receive your assurances of satisfaction at the peace I

¹ Journal, 19 Decembre, 1711.

have made with you. Count on the sincere reciprocity of my friendship, and be persuaded that besides the proofs I give you of it at this moment I shall always be ready in the future to show you how much I interest myself in whatever is of personal advantage to you and your House."¹

Though not deceived by these plausible words of interest in his concerns, of which he had had sufficient opportunities to value at their worth, Victor Amadeus dictated his reply in the same tone, and said :—

“VENERIA, *May 20th, 1713.*

“No felicitations can be more agreeable to me than yours, on an event of such importance as the peace in which you have taken so notable a part. I therefore also offer you my congratulations, assuring you that nothing can add to the esteem with which I shall always be, Monsieur,

“Your very affectionate servant,

“V. AMÉDÉ.”²

Far more gratifying to Victor Amadeus than these complimentary letters from his most bitter foe was the sincere and affectionate interest taken by Queen Anne in all the agreements that tended to the benefit of Savoy. She seemed to have put the Duke's States entirely under her protection, and her apparent resolution to obtain for Victor Amadeus whatever conces-

¹ Corres. Savoie, Ministère des Affaires étrangères.

² *Ibid.*

sions she considered he merited is corroborated in all the official despatches. The Consigliere Mellarede, one of the delegates from Savoy at the Congress held at Utrecht, refers to the interest being shown by the Queen in the following letter :—

“Her Majesty has a sincere and cordial affection for Y.R.H. This arises not only in recognition of important services rendered by Y.R.H. to the common cause and the confidence she has always felt in you, but also for the reason that Madame the Duchess and the Royal Princes are her nearest relations.”¹

As the result of the new partitions of States discussed at the Congress, report spread that Sicily would be allotted to Savoy, and all the political correspondence that passed between Bolingbroke and the Ambassadors of Savoy, both in London and Paris, bears evidence of Queen Anne's firm determination to protect the interests of Savoy. In a letter from the Conte Maffei, the Ambassador in London, to Victor Amadeus, August 12th, 1712, he affirmed that a rumour having spread that France showed some hesitation in complying with the Queen's desire to confer the kingdom of Sicily on the Duke of Savoy, “he was assured that Her Majesty remained unshaken in her resolution that the cession and actual possession of Sicily by Y.R.H. was a *sine quâ non* to her making peace with the two kingdoms.”

¹ Carutti, p. 302.

On another occasion Maffei wrote :—

“ Milord Bolingbroke has just left me. He goes to France to-morrow, and told me that when the interests of England only were concerned, Prior had been sent to Paris ; but now that Savoy was the subject in dispute, he himself was commissioned to go, whereby Y.R.H. should be convinced how much the Queen has your welfare at heart.”¹

Distrustful as the Duke had become, having been so often deceived by the flattering promises made by France, this time a personal letter from the Queen set his mind at rest, and convinced him he had no right to raise similar doubts on the sentiments expressed by Anne in the followings words :—

“ MY BROTHER,—As the actual position of public affairs and the strange conduct of some of my allies obliges me to enter into peace with France and Spain, my sincere friendship, as well as the special care I have for your interests, decides me at the same time to communicate to you my intentions. My earnest wish is to be closely allied to Y.R.H., whether in peace or war, and for this reason Count Maffei, your Ambassador Extra., has by my permission been put in possession of all the propositions I have made to the Court of France in your favour. I hope the same courier who is the bearer both of this letter, and of the report from your Minister on this subject, will also carry to you offers from His Most Christian

¹ *Ibid.*, Appendix, p. 540.

Majesty conforming to my wishes and desires ; they will, I trust, entirely convince Y.R.H. that no one can be more sincerely yours than

“ Your affectionate Sister,

“ ANNE.

“ *Kensington, 28/17th July, 1712.*”¹

To these marks of friendly feeling on the part of his wife's kinswoman Victor Amadeus responded in expressions of genuine pleasure, and amid the multiplicity of interests and counter interests in which other countries so often showed a great desire to obtain the holocaust of Savoy, he felt that in the hands of Queen Anne his cause was safe and sure.

Not till April 13th, 1713, was the Treaty of Utrecht definitely concluded. Queen Anne's stipulations had been agreed to, and the long years of warfare in which the States of Savoy had suffered for the common cause were acknowledged, in consideration of which she was to receive the kingdom of Sicily and all the possessions in Italy belonging to Spain ; in default of heirs in direct line, the crown of Sicily would return to Spain. The rights of Savoy to the succession of the throne of Spain were also recognised. Her claims on France were equally satisfactory ; a boundary was settled on by mutual consent between the two countries, and Louis XIV. agreed to give back to the Duke the whole of Savoy, the forts of Exilles and Fenestrelle, the county of Nice, etc.

¹ *Ibid.*, Appendix, p. 537.



VITTORIO AMEDEO II., DUCA DI SAVOIA, I^o RE DI SARDEGNA. NATO IN TORINO IL 14 MAGGIO 1666, MORTO A MONCALIERI IL 31 OTTOBRE 1732

*From the Palazzo Regina Margherita, Rome
By gracious permission of H.M. Queen Margherita*

VICTOR AMADEUS II., FIRST KING OF SICILY AND SARDINIA, IN 1713

SICILY FORMS THE BACKGROUND OF THE PICTURE

These stipulations, so advantageous on many points to Savoy, were still not completely to the Duke's satisfaction. Had it been practicable, for many reasons, but especially owing to its contiguity to Savoy, Victor Amadeus would have preferred the Milanese States to Sicily. In fact, whilst the portioning out of allotments to each country was in progress, he had mooted an alliance between the Prince of Piedmont and a daughter of the late Emperor, one of the Arch-duchesses of Austria, who would have brought the Duchy of Milan to the House of Savoy as a marriage dowry. This scheme seemed impossible of realisation, and Victor Amadeus could not disguise to himself the difficulties likely to arise in connection with his new kingdom. He was unable to conceal his anxiety as to what might be the consequences should Austria prove troublesome whilst he was away in his dominion so far from Piedmont. Sicily had no militia of her own : it was therefore necessary to provide her with troops. This, owing to the absence of a fleet, was in itself a difficult matter, and also if troops and ammunition could be transported to Sicily, the north of Italy was left insufficiently defended. France had proposed to give Lombardy to Savoy, which would have suited the Duke much better, and was in fact more practical.

All these objections were laid before Maffei previous to the conclusion of the treaty, but the answer he received from the English ministers—"that it would be advisable not to think of what was impossible"—

warned the Duke of the danger of creating difficulties, and he turned his thoughts to the honour of the concession for himself and his country. As it became more evident to him the powerful position he would occupy in the future, he felt a very natural sense of pride of having contributed to the dignity and aggrandisement of his country. The value set by Queen Anne on the services he had rendered, and the practical proofs she had given him of her appreciation, so largely compensated for the trying circumstances of the past years, that the successful issue of his desperate struggle with France, in which his abilities for diplomacy, his endurance, and fine courage had been productive of such good to his people's welfare, almost engendered in Victor Amadeus a kind of obligation towards the country he most detested.

In anticipation of his coronation at Palermo as King of Sicily, Victor Amadeus, in July, 1713, had issued very minute instructions to Barone Perrone, his Minister in Paris, who was to assume also the position of Ambassador to the Court of Sicily.

No detail had been omitted by Victor Amadeus to ensure his Ambassador receiving the respect due to his official position and to a knight of the Order of the Annunziata.

It was notified to Perrone that he would have precedence over the Ambassadors of Prussia and those of the Republics of Venice and Holland: to the English Ambassador only must he give precedence.

All the etiquettes to be observed on paying official

visits to the Princes of the Court of Versailles were dictated with the same precision, nor were the courtesies towards the exiled widow of James II. omitted ; on this point Perrone was instructed in the following words :—

“The Queen of England is in France, and has retired to a convent a short distance from Paris ; you will inquire if she receives foreign ministers. Previous to the war, after the death of her husband in September, 1701, our Ambassador, at her own request, did not go to her Court at St. Germain en Laye, for the reason that her son, the Prince of Wales, was residing there with her. We did not recognise the Prince as King, and under the circumstances his mother expressed the opinion that it would have been incongruous should the Conte di Vernone, our Ambassador, visit the mother and not the son, who lived in the same palace. But now, as the Prince of Wales has left France and is enjoying the hospitality of the Duc de Lorraine at Bar, and the Queen is living alone, she may be pleased to see you when she receives other foreign ministers. If this be agreeable to the Queen, you are to present to Her Majesty the enclosed letter, with adequate expressions of our unalterable devotion to her, as it should be, seeing the near blood relationship between her royal family and ours. It is necessary to bear in mind, in the supposition that any secret negotiations have been instigated between the reigning Queen of England and the Court of France bearing on the succession of the Prince of Wales to the throne of Great Britain,

that it must be the subject of your attention, and you must try and cultivate it. If such an idea could be developed, it would require delicate handling and would lead to a change of considerable importance. It is therefore advisable that you should do your utmost to be on good terms with the Queen, the mother of the Prince of Wales, as it is quite possible that one day her son, should subsequent events in England prove favourable to the said Prince of Wales, would be of service to the Princes, my sons. It is needless to add that you must carry out this suggestion without any exaggeration, and in such a way that no one may suspect any ulterior motives in your attentions.

“VENERIA, *July 26th, 1713.*”¹

This letter, from a deeply interesting and not well-known collection of despatches bearing on the negotiations of the Court of Savoy with other Courts, arranged with unsparing pains and care by the Barone A. Manno, reveals, without explanation, the Duke's future aspirations of maintaining a close alliance with England. He still bore in mind the proposal, originated by William III., of bringing up one of his sons with the possible view of his claim to the throne of England, and the marked attentions paid by Queen Anne to both himself and the Duchess as blood relations decided Victor Amadeus to increase that feeling of kinsmanship. He knew that Queen Anne showed

¹ *Relazioni diplomatiche della Monarchia di Savoia*, vol. i., pubblicate da Antonio Manno. E. Ferrero e P. Vayra, Torino, 1886.

very friendly feelings to her brother the Chevalier de St. Georges, and the rumour spread that she had expressed a great desire that he should be called to the throne of Great Britain. The possibility of an event of such importance could not be overlooked by Savoy, and whilst the Treaty of Utrecht was still under discussion, he gave instructions to Maffei in London not to show greater partiality for either the Whigs or Tories, but to remember that the fall of either party might entail consequences of moment to Savoy.¹

The following letter from Perrone, December 30th, 1713, confirmed Victor Amadeus as to the wisdom of his policy towards his Stuart relations. The Minister repeated the rumour that "the King of England, James III., then in Lorraine, had sent away his Catholic priests and replaced them with Anglicans, which had given rise to reports that he intended to change his religion, and that the two Courts of France and England were acting in concert to place the King of England on the throne."²

Now that there was no reason to retard his departure, the Duke was very impatient to enter into possession of his new kingdom, and in his letters to his daughter, the Queen of Spain, he urged on her to press Philip V. to evacuate the island, and to give the necessary instructions previous to the arrival of his successor.

¹ Carutti, p. 302.

² *Relazioni Diplomatiche*, vol. i.

Fortunately the delicate question of occupying the kingdom belonging to his son-in-law did not lead to any friction between the Duke and his daughter. The tact of the young Queen of Spain was as admirable in this as in other equally trying situations, and no breach of affection arose between herself and her parents. The Duchess, who considered this recently acquired honour with some anxiety, poured out her hopes and fears on the new life before her to Marie Louise, and by making a confidant of her daughter relieved her agitation on the prospect of all that would be expected of her as Queen.

There is a great charm in the absolute simplicity of the correspondence that passed between mother and daughter, in which the position was reversed, and Marie Louise, by the precious gift of sympathy she had inherited from the Duchess, tries to instil courage into her mother's anxious heart.

When the Duchess wrote in distress at having to leave the two Princes behind at Turin, Marie Louise at once touched the right chord, and, while condoling on the separation, reminded the Duchess how far harder it had been for her who had been parted for so long from her parents without any hope of ever seeing them again ; and she added, she was sure that her brother, on whom would fall the responsibilities of Regent during his parents' absence, would far sooner they should not have left him, as the satisfaction of such a position was but small in comparison of the worry it entailed. She said that she knew by

experience, when she held the post of Regent on different occasions, how weary she was of the whole thing, and described how, as soon as the Councils were over, she generally ran off and had a good game of blind man's buff for recreation.¹

In another letter the Duchess pleaded her ignorance on the etiquettes in use at the Court of Spain. She thought the Court of Sicily would be modelled on the same usages, and knew how important a part ceremonials played in that Court, for no doubt the observance of all the customs in use would be expected of her. Marie Louise, at the Duchess's request, afforded such help as she could to her mother on the chief formalities not to be overlooked. She added some information that her mother particularly asked for relating to the *Grandeas* of Spain, telling her they were represented by three orders, each of which had its own separate duties and privileges. Amongst other regulations to which they conformed with stringent pertinacity, the first order might keep on their hats in the presence of the King and Queen, nor did they remove them when addressing their Majesties. It was required of the second order to make their address with their hats off, but they put them on immediately after, without waiting for the King's reply; whilst the third order had to remain bare-headed during the whole time of the address and the Sovereign's answer. These distinctions, Marie Louise said, were only observed at the audience of presenta-

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 347.

tion, and did not refer to their wives, who all had the right to the "Almueda," which corresponded to the "tabouret" when in the Queen's presence, whilst those ladies who were not married to the Grandees had to sit on the floor.¹

In confiding the government of Piedmont to his son only fifteen years of age, Victor Amadeus had spared no trouble in the choice of those he named to form the Prince's Council, and the Duke's subjects watched with satisfaction all the precautions taken by him to ensure the wise administration of his country during his absence, which, even before he started, it was known would be of short duration.

On September 22nd, 1713, Victor Amadeus was proclaimed King of Sicily at Turin, and on the morning of that day his two sons, the Principe di Piemonte and the Duca d'Aosta, were the first to enter his room and to kiss his hand in recognition of their Sovereign. The Princes were succeeded by the Bishops, the Knights of the Annunziata, and the Ministers of State, after which the doors of the King's room were thrown open by the Chamberlain, and all the nobility were permitted to enter. When this reception was over, Victor Amadeus, attended by his Court, went into the antechamber and seated himself under a magnificent canopy of state, with one Prince each side of him in order to receive the homage of the Senate, the members of the Chamber and the Syndics.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 348.

Similar receptions were held in the apartments of the Duchess and Madame Royale. General rejoicings took place on this day and those following. These took a still more enthusiastic form on a proclamation issued by the King abolishing the taxes raised during the war.

On this occasion Victor Amadeus created his two sons Knights of the Annunziata, and also bestowed the Order on the Marquis de Coudrey, the Marquis de St. Thomas, Général Rhebinder, and on other well-known personages. The Conte Maffei, who by his tact and competence had, in great measure, contributed to a termination of affairs so satisfactory for Savoy, was given the post of General of Artillery, and eventually he was appointed Viceroy of Sicily.

Before leaving, the King confided the care of Mademoiselle di Susa to Madame Royale, and both ladies accompanied the King and Queen to Raconigi for a night on their departure for Sicily. On saying farewell to his mother the next morning Victor Amadeus implored her blessing. Madame Royale was so unprepared for such a request from her son, with whom she had never lived on terms of confidence or affection, that she involuntarily hesitated. This movement was not unobserved by the King, who told his mother that it grieved him to think he had ever caused her any displeasure. The simple appeal to her as a mother touched Madame Royale, and folding him in her arms, she said, "I have always loved you as my son, but perhaps it was I who,

without wishing it, have been the cause of some pain.”¹

Madame Royale and Mademoiselle di Susa then returned to Turin, but the sons went with their parents as far as a small place called Dalmetto. The Principe Tommaso di Carignano, the second son of the King’s uncle, was the only member of the royal family who accompanied the Sovereigns to Sicily.

As they approached Nice, the King on horseback and the Queen in a chair, the roads were lined with peasants and labourers who had abandoned their work in the fields, and with their wives and children congregated to see the procession. Before entering Nice, the Sovereigns were met by the four Syndics of the town in gala costume, and were escorted by them on horseback through the streets.

The next day the royal party left for Villafranca, where, by order of Queen Anne, they found Admiral Jennings with some ships of his fleet in readiness to convey the Sovereigns and 5,000 Piedmontese troops to Sicily. The ships of this squadron remained in the proximity of Sicily for the protection of the island.

A letter from the Marquis de Torcy, Ambassador to the Court of France at Turin, to Cardinal Gualtieri in Rome bearing reference to the voyage, is most important, as it reveals his impressions on the subject ; the Ambassador did not limit himself to stating facts, but enlarged on the motives and designs with which

¹ Carutti, p. 330.

Victor Amadeus was credited. The letter from de Torcy runs as follows :—

“Good news has been brought from Sicily, though the voyage was not accomplished without a great storm. Some of the fleet conveying the troops got separated from the rest and had to take shelter in the port of Nettuno. One ship went to the bottom, but the crew and cargo were saved. Report says that a good reception was accorded by the Sicilians, and the date of the coronation appears to be fixed for Christmastide. It is supposed that the King will not remain more than eight or ten months in Sicily, but I do not think this is official, for it appears to me that this Prince does not confide his intentions to others. From all I can observe, new conquests and further concessions are thought of, besides a great desire to become an important and stable power. I also gather that though they speak of the grandeur of this new Kingdom of Sicily, I do not believe that they are entirely contented, and consider it in the light of a disjointed member owing to its distance. I have been surprised with the frankness with which they have spoken on their desire to increase their States and do not disguise it from us ; possibly they are persuaded that such impressions are not displeasing to France.

“TURIN, *November 4th, 1713.*”¹

Now, as formerly, Madame Royale was a most willing co-operator in the hands of the French Ambassador, and the Marquis de Torcy, whose attention

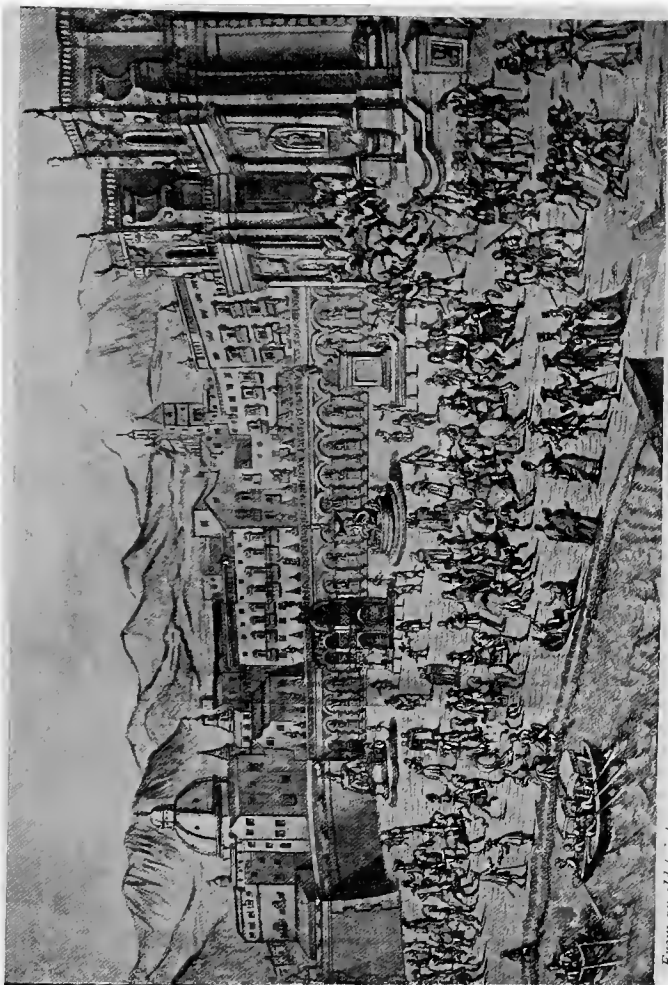
¹ Corres. Savoie, Ministère des Affaires étrangères.

was roused by Madame Royale's grievance that Victor Amadeus should not have left the Regency in her hands, encouraged her to confide in him, and transmitted the knowledge he thus acquired in the following remarks he addressed to the Cardinal :—

“ Though Madame Royale speaks in admiration of her son, and does not disguise her satisfaction that he should be reunited to France, I cannot help seeing that she is not as satisfied as she would wish to appear ; she has even confessed to me that she suffers great annoyance on this subject. I have no hesitation in believing that she drew this on her by the great sympathy she shows for France ; and she evidently is persuaded of this herself, because, after speaking of her son in the terms of which I have told you, she begged me not to say too much respecting her private sentiments, as they might be taken amiss. I see, even though she professes the contrary, she is annoyed that the government of affairs was not confided to her during the absence of the King her son. She tries to minimise the importance of the position by telling me that all affairs are done from Sicily, and that this Regency is a matter of pure formality ; the despatches come from there, and everyone receives his orders. I go and see Madame Royale every evening, for my sole reason for being here is to be kept informed with regard to the King.”¹

These letters from the Ambassador leave no room for doubt that the “ espionage ” so inconsiderately

¹ *Ibid.*



From an old print

VICTOR AMADEUS IN SICILY

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO PALERMO THROUGH THE PORTA FELICE TO THE CATHEDRAL

obtained by the Principe di Scalo

exercised over Victor Amadeus when Duke of Savoy was still to be maintained over the King of Sicily.

The ships having on board the King and Queen anchored off Palermo on October 10th, and were immediately surrounded by innumerable boats and barges containing all the nobility of the island. The Spanish Viceroy, Marchese Los Balbases, who had deferred his departure in order to hand over the reins of office to Victor Amadeus, was the first to arrive. He was followed by the Archbishop with his Vicar General in three galleys to present their homage to the Sovereigns, who deferred landing till the next day in order to give time to the troops to disembark and to take up their quarters.

The account of all the functions relating to the entry into Palermo, and the description of the coronation, delightfully told by the Grand Master of the Ceremonies, Marchese d'Angrogna, graphically lays the picturesque scenes before his readers on the reception accorded to the new Sovereign.

The King and Queen landed late in the afternoon of the 11th: carriages with six horses were awaiting them by order of the Viceroy. Victor Amadeus and the Queen seated themselves in the first carriage, and, preceded by mounted guards and officials on foot, they entered the illuminated and gaily decorated streets of Palermo as evening was falling. The procession halted before the door of the cathedral, where, accompanied by the Archbishop and clergy, all the Court left their carriages and entered

the church. The relics of Sta. Rosalia were exposed for their adoration ; a *Te Deum* was then sung, followed by benediction.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the King and Queen again took their seats in the carriage, and the procession re-formed. Whilst they had been in the cathedral darkness had fallen, and the enchantment of a Southern night added solemnity to the vivid brilliancy of the scene. Above and beyond the popular demonstrations, the sapphire sky studded with stars conveyed a feeling of restfulness, and mellowed all the crude and tawdry effects of the welcome. Half-way up the stairs of the palace they were met by the canons of the Chapel Royal, into which they went for the exposition of the Holy Sacrament, and from thence to their apartments, where the nobility advanced to kiss their hands. The King had on a dark brown coat embroidered in gold, and the Queen was in black, with a very long train covered with diamonds.

It was noticed by his suite that Victor Amadeus, who did his best to modify his abrupt and stiff manner, received everyone with gracious smiles and pleasant words ; and the people were quite sincere in their desire to receive the King with enthusiasm and goodwill. Their great wish had been to have a Sovereign who would reside among them, and not leave their destinies in the hands of a Viceroy, whom they regarded as the source of all the ills that befell the island. The fame of Victor Amadeus had preceded his arrival, and the

Sicilians were justly proud that one so renowned in war, in administration, and in capacity for government should have been selected for their King. On his side, Victor Amadeus, though well aware that the distance from his old dominions would make a permanent stay in Sicily impossible, was, nevertheless, conscientiously resolved to work for the improvement of his new kingdom and for the welfare of the people given to his charge.

Victor Amadeus lost no time in showing his intentions of proceeding on the same methodical system of conducting the State affairs as he adopted in Turin, and he astonished the Sicilians, accustomed to the indolent habits of the Spaniards, by the amount of work that he accomplished in the early morning. Long before most of the nobility had left their beds the King had conferred with his ministers, taken decisions on urgent affairs, and had made his rapid yet thorough survey of every part of the town.

The people were especially struck by the strict observance he paid to all the religious ceremonies, of which there were many, and the admiration he expressed at the beautiful church of Monreale filled their hearts with pride.

It was impossible that subjects should remain indifferent to a Sovereign whose wish to improve their conditions was uppermost in his mind, and they appreciated his judicious mode of government and the tact he showed with those he had found in office, even if his views were not entirely in agreement with theirs.

The King considered his slight knowledge of the Italian language a great drawback to his wish to identify himself with his people, and at once applied himself to improving it. In Turin either dialect or French were generally spoken, which accounted for the small practice he had had in Italian. The Queen, who was supposed to have facility for languages, was rather perplexed at finding that many of the ladies only spoke Sicilian dialect, and she wrote to Madame Royale: "The Sicilian language is worse than Genoese. If you were here I think you would laugh, as when I have tired myself in speaking Italian to these ladies many of them have not understood anything I said, and I am equally at a loss to know what they said to me."¹

Shortly after their arrival the Queen inaugurated her evening receptions, and the large assembly of ladies who presented themselves for the honour of kissing her hand encouraged those who hoped that the popularity their Majesties had already attained in Palermo would be extended to other parts of the island.

Meanwhile the solemn entry of the King into Palermo had not as yet taken place. The reception offered him on his arrival was looked on as purely a private function owing to the impossibility of getting the difficulties over in time that had arisen on the question of precedence. A great deal of diplomacy

¹ Letter to Madame Royale, December 2nd, 1713, *Anna di Savoia*, p. 366.



Obtained by

the Principe di Scalea

ALLEGORICAL PICTURE PUT UP IN FRONT OF ONE OF
THE PALACES IN VIA TOLEDO

Facing p. 434

and discretion had to be employed to overcome all the obstacles regarding the various prerogatives, and it was not before the month of December that the official position was finally regulated of those taking part in the procession fixed for the 21st.

Extracts from the report on the ceremonies incidental to the public entry into Palermo relate that on the morning of December 21st, the day that the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Thomas, the whole of the population of Palermo was to be seen moving in the direction of the plain of St. Erasmus, a stretch of ground about a mile square just beyond the walls of Palermo. This had been chosen as the rallying-point of the procession. A pavilion had been erected in the centre of the plain, the roof of which was draped with crimson velvet and silver, and the large inner hall was decorated with gold, shot with red and sky blue ; the floors were strewn with priceless carpets. Under a magnificent canopy were placed two chairs for their Majesties, who arrived at nine o'clock, preceded by the gentlemen of the Court and the ladies and maids of honour, after all the nobility and Senators had taken their places.

The nobility formed a passage for their Majesties, who seated themselves on their thrones, and then the King ordered the procession to be formed, during which time the Great Chamberlain introduced to the King's presence the Prince de Butera, the premier Baron, and the highest title in the kingdom. The Prince knelt before the Monarch and assured him

of the inexpressible joy felt by all the people of his kingdom on his arrival. The Prince also gracefully added that though His Majesty had not yet made his public entry into the capital, he had nevertheless already entered into the hearts of his new subjects. The Monarch answered him in well-chosen words of response : he then rose, and taking from the equerry the standard of the kingdom, gave it to the Prince. This was a signal for all the artillery to fire from the ramparts of the town, and the King and Queen left the pavilion and mounted their horses. The Principe di Butera, holding the standard, headed the procession. Behind him was led a beautiful charger presented to the King by the Senate, then followed their Majesties riding side by side under a flame-coloured canopy held over their heads by six Senators, after which came all the dignitaries of State, the nobility mounted on superb horses, and the prelates and abbés who had parliamentary posts caracoling on mules, caparisoned either in black or violet velvet trappings.

The Sicilians were much impressed by the personal appearance of the Sovereigns, and passed many remarks of approbation on both the King and Queen. Victor Amadeus, who was approaching his forty-seventh year, looked very imposing under his long, curling wig falling on his shoulders. His expression of absolute confidence in himself, as, undisturbed by the agitated scene before him, his scrutinising gaze took in every detail of the popular demonstration of welcome, induced a feeling of respect amongst the

excited Sicilians, and as from admiration of the King they turned to the Queen they were equally won by her distinctive charm, and felt how much sympathy must be concealed under her undemonstrative yet gracious manner.

In all her letters to her sons in Turin the Queen did not disguise how little to her taste were the many obligations due to her new position ; but now, as always, she put her own wishes on one side, and provided that any self-abnegation on her part might be of advantage to the King, she entered upon her duties with the resolve to carry them out to the best of her abilities. In writing to the Duc d'Aosta she related one of the incidents of her cavalcade through the town : "Our entry last Thursday was most satisfactory, save that the thundering of the cannon and the noise of the people in the streets frightened my horse, and he stood on his hind legs, much to the alarm of everyone except myself, for I was fortunately able to keep my seat."

Six triumphal arches had been erected on the line of route to be taken by the procession. Three had been put up at the expense of the Senate, and the others were the charge of the Neapolitan, Genoese, and Milanese States. The decorations of each arch were emblematic of the traditions connected with the history of the various towns ; but the symbol of the union of Sicily to Northern Italy—the golden eagle of Palermo, or the black eagle of Sicily, in the centre of which was the cross

of Savoy supported by two lions—was to be seen on every arch.

The first triumphal arch had been erected near the Porta de Greci, where the Sovereigns were met by the Archbishop of Palermo holding a cross and surrounded by a large number of priests. The King and Queen got off their horses to kiss the cross, and proceeded to the Porta Felice, the principal gate of Palermo ; another halt was made here whilst the keys of the town, placed in a silver salver, were presented to the King. Many other arches were passed as the procession made its way through the principal street, the Via del Cassaro, to the Cathedral. Every house on the route was decorated in a style of its own ; many exhibited allegorical pictures bearing reference to the arrival of Victor Amadeus and to the most memorable incidents of wars against the Saracens and Mussulmans. The whole of the Via del Cassaro was a blending of marvellous colours, produced by the rich velvets and tapestries draped on the balconies and fronts of the palaces. Amongst the most conspicuous decorations were those of the palace of the Principe di Villafranca ; the building was outlined in gold and silver, statues and pictures were arranged with wonderful scenic effect. In the cathedral the decorations were equally gorgeous. The eye ached with the effort to find a point on which to concentrate its attention, but amidst a profusion of plants and flowers, the multi-coloured uniforms, silks and velvets, and the glittering of the gold and silver trimmings,



From an old print

obtained by the Principe di Scalea

THE ENTRY OF THEIR MAJESTIES INTO PALERMO, AND THE
PRESENTATION OF THE KEYS OF THE TOWN

the task of detaching one object from another, save the eagle of Sicily, bearing on its breast the white cross of Savoy on a red ground, was hopeless.

The ceremony of the swearing in of the ecclesiastics, the nobility, and the parliamentary officials then took place, after which the King ascended the throne, and the Principe di Scordia, the Mayor of Palermo, went on his knees and presented the New Testament to Victor Amadeus, who bareheaded placed his ungloved hand on the book, and said in a clear voice to be heard by all, "I swear."¹

The coronation that took place two days later, on the 24th, was conducted much on the same lines of ceremony as those observed on the entry into the town. On this occasion the King and Queen, instead of being on horseback, were drawn in a gala coach with eight horses, followed by others conveying the Court. The Queen wrote long letters to Madame Royale and her sons, descriptive of the ceremony, and said she was surprised how soon it was over; she had been prepared that it would last five hours, whereas it only took three hours and a half. The Queen had assisted at the crowning of the King from a tribune, and described to her son how the Lord Chamberlain had bared the King's arm to the elbow in order that he should be anointed with the sign of

¹ A Relation of the Glorious Entry in Palermo of their Majesties Victor Amadeus the Great, King of Sicily, Jerusalem, and Cyprus, and Queen Anna of France, December 21st, 1713. State Archives, Turin.

the cross between the hand and the elbow-joint and likewise between the shoulders. The Queen in terms of admiration enlarged on the King's appearance when seated in his royal robes, the crown on his head, and the sceptre in his hand, and made but small reference to herself; yet when she left her tribune and, in a dress of cloth of silver and priceless gems, she knelt before the Archbishop and went through the formalities of her coronation, she formed a picture that, as stated by an eye-witness, "revealed the dignity of birth and the blood royal of France and Great Britain flowing in her veins. Though she produced a dazzling effect in the blaze of precious stones in which she glittered from head to foot, yet the pleasure of those who looked at her was not derived from the adornments, but from the goodness and sympathy that was felt by her expression."¹

The next important function was the opening of Parliament, February 20th, 1714. The King's speech met with general approbation, all the more so as, contrary to custom, he made no reference to subsidies or donations to the Crown. This unexpected discretion on the part of the King was most embarrassing to the Archbishop of Palermo, whose reply to the Speech from the Throne had been prepared with the certainty that Victor Amadeus would make the same exorbitant demands as his predecessors; and the necessity of having to improvise an answer more adapted to circumstances proved too great a tax on

¹ Ceremoniale d'Angrognà, *Anna di Savoia*, p. 378.

the prelate's capacities, and in his agitation he could only stammer a few incoherent words.¹

It was to be regretted that, while on the one hand Victor Amadeus had in so short a time identified himself in the interests of his new subjects, and gained so great a share of popularity, there should have been any grounds for discontent; but to the Sicilians all other questions were secondary to that of his permanent residence in the island, and on this point of vital importance they had their suspicions.

The readiness with which Victor Amadeus had accepted the throne of Sicily had encouraged the belief that he intended to live amongst his Sicilian subjects for, at all events, an indefinite time. Still, many incidents, unimportant in themselves, but indicating that his home and people in Northern Italy commanded his personal interests, led the mistrustful Sicilians to take umbrage at every little detail they considered a slight to their position.

The numerous Piedmontese suite by which the King was always surrounded was one of the sources of jealousy, and though on New Year's Day he dined in public in order to please the people, the kind intention was spoilt by the ill-advised distribution of seats, the principal places being allotted to those Piedmontese who took part in the banquet.

These and similar errors were to some extent remedied by the appointment of several of the Sicilian nobility to posts at Court, and at the request of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

Parliament Victor Amadeus gave the command of a bodyguard, composed of forty Sicilian patriots, to the Principe di Villafranca, who were to be incorporated in the bodyguard of Piedmont and of Savoy.

These evidences of the King's goodwill, whilst appreciated by the Sicilians, did not dissipate the growing discontent, as the conviction gained ground that he did not intend to settle in Sicily permanently. Whilst this unfortunate feeling of distrust was spreading between the King and his subjects, the sad news of the death of Marie Louise, Queen of Spain, added new fears that the King and Queen might be still more tempted to hasten their return to their old home.

Even before this last event, when the King had announced his intention of visiting Messina and other parts of the island, the rumour spread that this plan had been arranged to enable him to leave the island without obstacles. The Queen in writing to Madame Royale said that in answer to inquiries made to her by the Sicilian ladies on the subject, she generally told them she might possibly be going to Piedmont to fetch her two sons. That seemed to give them so much pleasure, as alluding to the permanent residence of the Sovereigns in the island, that she had not the courage to undeceive them.¹

The news of the death of Marie Louise was all the more painful to her parents, as owing to the difficulties of communication it had occurred two months previous to the arrival of the sad intelligence.

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 392.



From a print, obtained by

the Principe di Scalo

ALLEGORICAL PICTURE RELATING TO THE CORONATION OF VICTOR AMADEUS

SET UP IN FRONT OF ONE OF THE PALACES IN VIA TOLEDO

Facing p. 442

The Queen had known that her daughter was in an unsatisfactory state of health, but did not give the matter serious attention till the month of January, when the reports became such as to induce Victor Amadeus to send his own doctor to Madrid to attend Marie Louise. In one of her letters to Madame Royale, the Queen, whose anxiety was now thoroughly roused, dwelt on the disadvantages of being in Sicily, as were she in Turin she would then be able to have more frequent bulletins on her daughter's health by means of France.

The unavoidable delays by sea led to a contradiction of reports impossible to follow, and the letters sent and received were always at cross purposes till April 6th : on that day five letters arrived by the same courier, one of which, without giving any details, announced the fatal termination of the illness on February 14th.

The desperate grief of the Queen was pitiful to behold, and her absolute feeling of loneliness away from her two boys in this moment of terrible sorrow is shown in a few lines she wrote to her second son. "Ah, my dear Carlino," she exclaimed, "how is it possible for me to describe to you my feelings of bitter pain on the loss of your dear sister? Not to have you with me to soothe my grief in this sad event adds to my despair."¹

For several days subsequent to the death of Marie Louise many Masses were celebrated in Palermo for

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

the repose of her soul. The five months' mourning ordered by the King was very severe ; he himself wore black cloth, his sword in a black scabbard and buckles the same as his shoes, black crape round his hat and black gloves. The Queen put on black woollen garments trimmed with jet, and wore a black veil ; the gentlemen and ladies at Court were dressed in like manner as their Majesties. All the servants were put in black liveries, and the coaches were painted black.¹

For the first week of mourning the Queen was permitted to live in retirement, and the King alone was seen going to and from Mass ; but at the end of those few days the cruel exigencies of Court etiquette obliged her to go through the ordeal of receiving the condolences of people who were absolute strangers to her, and who, as they had never seen the Queen of Spain, could only offer purely formal expressions of sympathy.

In Spain the distress of the Spaniards was sincere and profound on the death of their Queen Marie Louise, whom they had always treated almost as a divinity. To Philip V. she was an indescribable loss, as it was due to the affection she inspired that during her reign of ten years, danger to the King had been averted on many critical occasions ; and even after her death it was the remembrance of all she had done for the people that saved his throne more than once. To such an extent was she adored that the people

¹ Ceremoniale d'Angrognà.

invariably greeted Philip V. and his second wife, Elizabeth Farnese, whom they detested, with cries of "Viva el Rey y la Savoyana!" ("Long live the King and the Savoyarde!"), whenever he appeared in public with the unpopular successor to Marie Louise.

Prostrated and crushed as was the Queen by this heavy blow, the journey to Messina could not be any longer postponed, and on April 19th she and the King left Palermo by the overland route. The sea voyage had been abandoned by medical advice in view of the Queen's delicate health. No time had been given her to recover from the terrible shock she had sustained, and in her actual condition a sea voyage was an impossibility.

This may have been a prudent precaution, but the Queen's descriptions of being carried in a chair for seven or eight hours each day over the roughest and most precipitous paths do not convey the impression of a restful journey; the Queen discloses how deeply she was suffering by these words to Madame Royale:—

"My sorrow has made me so indifferent to everything that I go as I am told without thinking whether I suffer or not. Nothing seems to me of importance after what has occurred. However, it is better, Madame, not to refer to it, as doing so only increases our grief."¹

¹ Letter to Madame Royale, April 14th, 1714.

Hard as it was, the Queen felt it incumbent on her to try and live down the depression that filled her heart, and did her best to show interest in the beauties of the country. On arriving at Messina, May 2nd, she expressed her admiration of the place, and described in her letters the magnificent view from the palace windows right across the harbour; she was also pleased at the warm welcome given them by the people. These laudable struggles against the feeling of loneliness that weighed over her were put on one side when she sat down to write her daily letter to Turin. At those times she found it a relief to express her feelings unreservedly, and in all her letters she dwelt on the longing she felt to return to Turin; and forgetting all she had suffered from the petty jealousies of Madame Royale, she constantly deplored not being with her, as they would have comforted each other in this sad moment.¹

The time passed by the King at Messina was fully occupied in improving the conditions of the people, who had suffered greatly in consequence of their rebellion in 1674 against Spanish rule. For a few years they were supported by France in their endeavours to shake themselves free of the bondage of Spain, but in 1678 Louis XIV. suddenly abandoned them, and, unaided, the people had to bear the consequences of their revolt. Victor Amadeus did all he could to repair the harm done to this unfortunate town: he restored all her privileges and reinstated her

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 396.

to her former position. Many of the nobility were given important Court appointments, and he gained the people's gratitude by lowering the price of bread and in organising a more productive system of commerce.

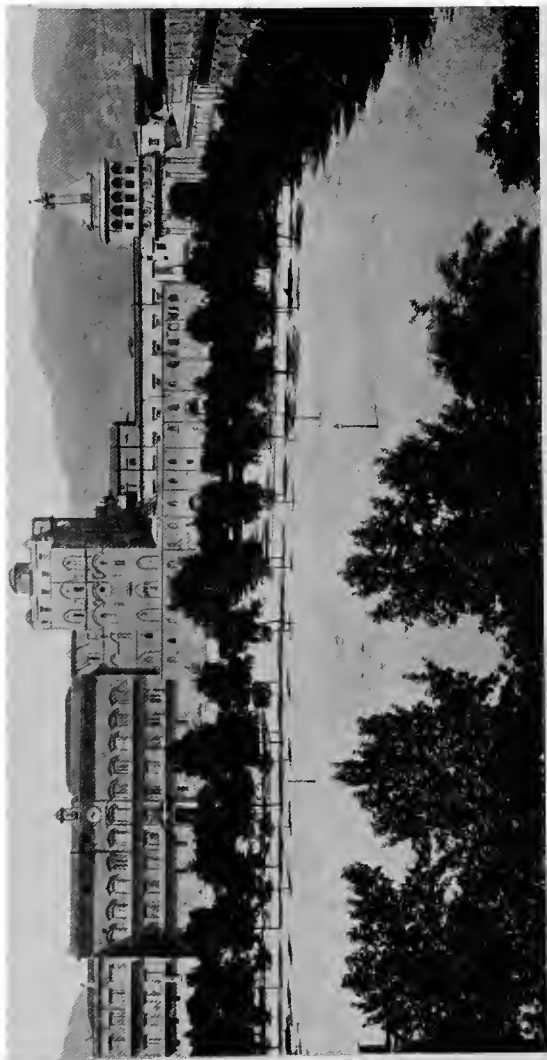
The few months at Messina were so prosperous, that the combination of circumstances all tending to lead to the King's departure was deeply to be regretted; and yet the intricacies of his position became too much involved to admit of any other solution. One serious source of these troubles was the perpetual feud with the Pope. Everyone knows the singular concessions conferred by Urban II. on Ruggero, Count of Sicily, in the eleventh century, by which, under the title of Apostolic Legate, entire jurisdiction concerning ecclesiastical affairs was accorded to the monarchs of Sicily. This privilege had lasted, though often disputed by the Church of Rome, till Philip V. became King of Spain. With this Sovereign Clement XI. never came to an agreement. On the arrival of Victor Amadeus the Pope continued the struggle, in consequence of which he tried to prevent the coronation from taking place, and proved obdurate to all the King's efforts towards a conciliatory policy. Victor Amadeus was equally determined not to give way, and within certain limits, continued to maintain the supremacy on ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Victor Amadeus was compelled to leave Sicily before this question was settled. Garibaldi found it still existing in his day, and one of his first

acts as dictator was to assert his position in the great ceremonies that took place in the cathedral, by occupying the place of honour reserved to the King.

Added to these annoyances with the Pope, which hindered the King in the discharge of his duties, news from Turin was not entirely satisfactory. The proximity of the Imperial troops to Piedmont was a constant anxiety, and the King could not banish from his mind a total want of faith in the Emperor's intentions. In the early part of 1714 everything pointed to a renewal of hostilities, and all these preoccupations were increased by the unavoidable delay in communications. The Queen in writing to Madame Royale referred repeatedly to the annoyance of being kept in ignorance as to whether there was to be peace or war, as the King wished to regulate his plans accordingly.

The spring and early summer passed in this unsettled state of affairs, and the King wavered between his personal wish to return to Piedmont and the scruples which held him from abandoning the island; but the death of Queen Anne, August 1st, 1714, and the immediate recall of the English fleet from the Sicilian waters, swept away all previous hesitation, and having appointed Count Maffei Viceroy of Sicily, he sent him to Palermo to acquaint the ministers of his early departure.

Though the message with which Maffei was charged stated that the King was going to absent himself for a "certain time," the Sicilians were not



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deceived. The prospect of being again relegated to the government of a Viceroy was highly displeasing to them; and when Victor Amadeus paid his farewell visit to Palermo, and, after having received the dignitaries of the town, turned to receive the homage of his people, a gloomy and sullen silence fell on the population as they assisted at his embarkation and watched the ship out of sight carrying from them all their cherished hopes.

Many historians, writing dispassionately on this brief reign in Sicily, assert that the cession of the island to Victor Amadeus was due to interested motives on both sides, but it did not answer. It was called by the French *un marché de dupes*, and certainly the King and the Sicilians were alike deceived on the results of the agreement. In the opinion of these writers it was not possible that Victor Amadeus should be well received or popular in a country that for so many centuries had been ruled by Spain. Accustomed to the showy, luxurious, lazy life led by the Spaniards, in which there was a great amount of jesuitical government and absolute power, they were unable to adapt themselves to the King's military precision and economy, or the discipline claimed by him in observances connected with the army; whilst he, on his part, was lost in a new surrounding totally different from that in which he had been brought up. The distance of the island from his own possessions was alone a great drawback, and presented to his methodical mind the difficulties of his position; these

were all the greater in presence of the persistent wish of Sicily for autonomy. The King also saw that in order to affirm his rule he would have to depend on a large naval force, in which he was totally unprovided. To replace this deficiency a close alliance with England would be necessary, but at this moment, after the long war with France, England gave no signs of wishing to enter into new complications. To all these disadvantages must be added the one already mentioned, caused by the opposition of the Church of Rome and of the high authorities in the island, who did not stand by the regal power. For these various reasons Mongitore, La Lumia, and other eminent writers consider the short reign of Savoy in Sicily as a failure, and even harmful, and enthusiastically speak of its fall.

Without wishing to call into dispute such high authority, still these appreciations do not seem free from some exaggeration. As if the reign of Victor Amadeus was a failure, it has been shown that it did not pass without much good to his people ; perhaps, also, it was not devoid of great influences on the future destinies of the House of Savoy and of Italy.

CHAPTER VII

THE EXCHANGE OF KINGDOMS. DEATH OF THE QUEEN OF SICILY.

Victor Amadeus manifests concern on the death of the Queen of England—He corresponds with his Minister in Paris—He sends congratulations to George I.—Arrival of the King and Queen at Nice—The Queen's joy at seeing her sons again—The return to Turin—The marriage of Mademoiselle di Susa—Lord Peterborough urges his suit—Prince Vittorio di Carignano is chosen as bridegroom—Death of the Prince of Piedmont—The depression at Court—Uncontrollable despair of the King—The sympathy of Mary of Modena—Renewed correspondence with the Chevalier de St. Georges—Old rumours revived of Anna d'Orléans' claims to the throne of England—The assistance of Victor Amadeus is solicited in the Stuart cause—The King's disinclination to imperil his position—The death of Louis XIV.—Fears of a change of European politics in consequence—The anxiety of Victor Amadeus lest he should lose Sicily—His annoyance at the Principe di Carignano's conduct—The Prince and Princess abandon Turin—The King undertakes Prince Charles Emmanuel's education—His harshness towards his son—Unsatisfactory reports from Sicily—The King's fears verified—Sicily occupied by the Spaniards—The Viceroy unprepared for the attack—His difficulties to effect his departure—The official exchange of Sicily for Sardinia—The death of Mary of Modena—Mourning ordered by Victor Amadeus—The marriage of Prince Charles Emmanuel—Birth of the Duca d'Aosta—Death of the Princess of Piedmont followed by that of Madame Royale—The King decides on a second bride for Prince Charles—His unsuccessful efforts to escape from his father's tutelage—The charms of Princess Polixena—The Queen's appreciation of her daughter-in-law—Prolonged absence of the King and the Prince—Death of the little Duca d'Aosta—The Queen's health declines—Alarming symptoms—Her love of repose—Her continual care for others in spite of her own sufferings—Her last hours brightened by news of the birth of the Prince—Her death—The funeral oration on her admirable life—Her interment in the Superga.

IT was not without some concern that Victor Amadeus heard of the death of Queen Anne, for all Perrone's despatches had drawn attention to the increasing current

of feeling favouring the restoration of a Stuart King to the throne of Great Britain, and it was hard to foresee what proportions the struggles between the Jacobites and the Hanoverians might assume, or how far they might involve the peace of Europe. Perrone had frequently referred to the strong support given by Louis XIV. in the movement initiated by Queen Anne in favour of her brother's claims, and in a letter written in July, previous to the Queen's death, the Minister alluded to the efforts being made by France to secure the succession of the throne of Great Britain to the Chevalier de St. Georges, and informed Victor Amadeus "that the French Court was using the best endeavours to secure harmony between Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke, as the enemies of the reigning Queen were profiting by the differences of opinion between those two ministers."¹ Perrone in the same letter laid stress that everything was being done in France to neutralise a state of affairs that might damage the prospects of the Chevalier, who was recognised by that country as the King of England.

These despatches raised the hopes of Victor Amadeus on the ultimate success of the Stuart claimant ; they had also prepared him for a desperate struggle between the two parties. It was therefore with some disappointment that he received the following letter from Perrone, August 20th, written a few days after Queen Anne's death, in which short space of time the whole aspect of affairs was changed, and the Ambassador

¹ *Relazioni Diplomatiche*, vol. i., A. Manno.

announced, in distinct contradiction of his previous statements—

“The Elector of Hanover has been proclaimed King of Great Britain without opposition, and all is peaceful in England. It does not appear to me that France wishes to mix herself up further in the affairs of England. I have been told that the Chevalier de St. Georges went to Versailles, was taken up a back stair, and obtained a secret interview with the King of France. This may be true or not, but there is no doubt that the King of France wishes to live in peace, and has no desire to occupy himself with giving a king to England.”¹

Two days later, Perrone gave Victor Amadeus the further information that—

“the Chevalier had been to his Most Christian Majesty to ask his assistance, but Louis XIV. had requested him to leave the country, as the engagements by which he was bound, under existing circumstances, prevented him from taking any part in the Chevalier’s affairs. This had obliged the unfortunate Prince to return to Lorraine ; some thought that he intended, if possible, to embark for Scotland.”²

The unopposed accession of George I. to the throne of Great Britain, and the corroboration of the abandonment of the Stuart cause by Louis XIV., made Victor Amadeus consider the advisability of entering into favourable relations with the newly proclaimed King ;

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*

and as soon as he arrived at Nice, on September 22nd, 1714, at the conclusion of the three weeks' voyage from Sicily, after writing to Perrone to beg him to announce to His Most Christian Majesty the safe return of the King and Queen of Sicily, he proceeded in the following words, in which a feeling of unrest is betrayed, to inform the Ambassador on his intentions concerning the recognition of George I. :—

“We are sending the Marchese di Trivié to carry our congratulations to the new King of England ; you will mention this fact to the Marquis de Torcy to show that we have wished to follow the example of His Most Christian Majesty. We also thought it advisable to do this, as the new King succeeds not only to the throne, but to the obligations contracted in the Treaty of Utrecht. It is equally necessary that he should respect obligations incurred with France, so that His Most Christian Majesty may have no excuse to excite disturbances prejudicial to the new King in favour of the Prince of Wales, France being the only power to be feared in that matter. It does not seem to me possible that King George can have any difficulty in recognising us as Sovereigns of Sicily : it would be contrary to the conditions made at Utrecht ; all the more would it be incomprehensible on his part, as now he is King of England he is not bound to show the same consideration as he formerly observed when he was but simple Elector towards the Emperor. On the contrary, His Cæsarian Majesty must use great deference towards

the King of England in acknowledgment of the power he has acquired.”¹

Whilst Victor Amadeus passed the first few hours after landing at Nice in this busy interchange of despatches, the Queen occupied herself with the two Princes who had gone to Nice to meet their parents. As she folded them in her arms, her tears flowed afresh at the thought of her recent bereavement ; but she quickly recovered herself, and unwilling that her first meeting with her sons should be marred by her grief, she affectionately expressed her joy at being with them, and only remembered that she was reunited to her last surviving children ; while the prospect of being soon back again in her old home helped her to banish gloomy thoughts. This feeling of gratitude gave her courage to support all the demonstrations that necessitated great delays on the road, and the subsequent rejoicings and festivities raised by the people of Turin in honour of the Sovereigns’ return. The death of Marie Louise had affected the Queen too deeply to allow her to enter with any spirit into the lively displays of welcome, though with her habitual unselfishness she endeavoured to conceal how far her heart was from the scenes in which she was taking part, and, buoyed up with the hope that after the first feverish enthusiasm had died out she might expect a long period of repose, she graciously adorned all the receptions with her presence.

¹ *Ibid.*

The expectation of being able to lead a retired life was, however, a delusive hope, for one of the first matters to which Victor Amadeus directed his attention as soon as he had attended to the most urgent State affairs at Turin concerned Mademoiselle di Susa, for whom he wished to arrange a suitable marriage.

Vittoria di Susa had inherited her mother's powers of attraction, and by her exceptional beauty and vivacity she had captivated many hearts. Amongst her numerous suitors the noted Earl of Peterborough, who had been sent to Turin by Queen Anne as her Ambassador Extraordinary, was one of the most assiduous. This gallant officer, Commander of the Fleet and Governor of Minorca, whose noted career comprised the taking of Barcelona in 1705, and of defeating with 1,200 troops a Spanish army of 7,000, spoken of by Macaulay as "the most extraordinary man of his age," was not at all displeasing to Victor Amadeus, who was said to look favourably on the Earl's suit for the hand of his daughter. Unfortunately, with many other claims to admiration, in regard of looks Nature had dealt most unkindly with Lord Peterborough, and his ugliness was so painful that Mademoiselle di Susa repudiated his advances and absolutely declined to consider any thoughts of marriage with him.

This projected alliance with Lord Peterborough having failed, the King's choice fell on the Principe Vittorio di Carignano, the eldest son of the old deaf and dumb Principe Emmanuele. To this proposal,

which brought her into still closer connection with the royal family, Mademoiselle di Susa raised no objections, and as, besides the social advantages such a marriage would be to her, she also expressed a certain sympathy for the King's cousin, the betrothal was formally announced by Victor Amadeus to his ministers on October 19th ; and so quickly were the preparations hurried on that the nuptials were celebrated at Moncalieri on November 7th with great pomp and solemnity. The Queen, Madame Royale, and all the Princes of the blood assisted at the ceremony, and, with the exception of Madame Royale, the Court took part at the ball given by the King the same evening. The Queen would gladly have returned with Madame Royale to Turin, and thus spared the supreme effort of a most trying ordeal, through which she had so bravely borne herself. But she feared to displease the King, and rather than leave him alone to dispense hospitality, without betraying any signs of her weariness, she received all the guests who had met in honour of an occasion which brought to her mind many incidents she would have preferred to forget, and that could not be otherwise than most painful to her.

The growing dislike, due as much to physical as mental lassitude, shown by the Queen for any gaieties or entertainments became more and more pronounced, and after the death of the Prince of Piedmont, March 22nd, 1715, she was rarely to be seen at any public functions.

The death of the heir to the throne in his sixteenth year from small-pox, after an illness of a few days, was a cruel blow to both parents, and it may be said to have been the fatal turning-point in the Queen's already failing health. From that day it began steadily to decline, and all her former recuperative power seemed to have abandoned her. Unemotional and calm, even in such a moment of calamity, the wound was all the deeper and beyond any power of healing. It was only in her letters that she appeared to break through the control she had imposed on herself and revealed the anguish of a broken heart. One of those she wrote to Madame in Paris was stated by her stepmother to have been so piteous that "though Her Majesty accepts her sorrow in a truly Christian spirit, her despair would have softened a rock."¹

The necessity in which the Queen found herself to attend to the King and to dedicate her time in trying to infuse some of her soothing influence and resignation into his violent nature, was not without benefit to herself in this time of sorrow. Victor Amadeus, so capable of stoicism and courage in the battlefield and on occasions of arduous toil, gave way to deep depression, and could not restrain his bitter grief on the loss of the young Prince, on whom he had founded all his hopes. So violent were the paroxysms and unrestrained his fits of despair, that great anxiety was felt lest the King should lose his reason.

¹ Correspondence de Madame, *Anna di Savoia*, p. 412.

Amongst other alarming freaks giving rise to the fear that he was no longer master of his actions, he was often to be found in the royal stables with a drawn sword in his hand that he passed repeatedly over the horses' backs ; moreover, without pausing to consider whether it were reasonable or not, he summarily dismissed the Court physicians for having failed to cure the Prince. All the astrologers he had consulted had predicted the Prince's recovery, and the King had placed such confidence in this prediction that he attributed the calamity to neglect on the part of the doctors, and unjustly subjected them to his displeasure.

At this critical moment the Queen alone seemed to have any weight with the King. Her patience and gentle insistence that he should rouse himself gradually worked a change in the alarming symptoms, and with a return to his old force of character, Victor Amadeus suppressed the selfish traits of his sorrow, shook off his morbid excitability, and occupied himself again with the obligations due to his country.

As was usual on such occasions, the loss that Piedmont had suffered had to be announced to all the Courts of Europe, and Victor Amadeus hesitated as to whether he should observe the same deference towards the Chevalier de St. Georges. Though his claims to the throne of Great Britain were favoured at the Court of Turin, where he was recognised as James III., yet the recent accession of George I.

made the situation somewhat complicated. On reflection Victor Amadeus thought it best to compromise, and avoided any disagreeable consequences of a difficult position by writing a letter to Queen Mary Beatrice with which Perrone was instructed to proceed to St. Germain. The unhappy widow of James II., destitute and lonely, was filled with compassion for the bereaved parents, and a feeling of kindred sorrow filled her heart as she received the sad news of the Prince of Piedmont's death. Her expressions of sympathy were so touching, and her sentiments towards Victor Amadeus and the Queen were so graciously conveyed, that Perrone drew the King's attention to the delicacy shown both by Queen Mary Beatrice and the Duke of Berwick on reception of the announcement. The Ambassador stated that according to the King's orders he had expressed to the Duke the regret felt by their Majesties the King and Queen of Sicily, that under existing circumstances they could not write personally to the King of England, and hoped he would not treat it as an offence ; they were sure he would none the less share their grief on the loss of a Prince who had had the honour of being so nearly related to James III. Perrone went on to say :—

“The Duke of Berwick made many protestations of regrets on the sad loss incurred by your Majesty. He also assured me that the King of England would hear of it with great grief and sorrow, and begged me to assure your Majesty that never would the

King wish any step to be taken that might be prejudicial to your own interests.”¹

The preparations for the Chevalier's expedition to Scotland were already far advanced at this time, and his chances of success were anxiously followed by the Court of Turin, to whom Perrone sent almost daily despatches on the reports connected with the expected rising in favour of the exiled Prince. All these letters from the Ambassador show the close relations in which Victor Amadeus remained with the Chevalier de St. Georges and the Duke of Berwick, and they also reflect credit on the tact employed by Perrone, which enabled him to remain on friendly terms with Lord Stair, the English Ambassador in Paris; a matter of great importance to Victor Amadeus, though his sympathies were in favour of the Stuart Prince.

In November, 1715, Perrone communicated to Victor Amadeus a report of special interest to the House of Savoy, and stated that he had been assured by the Duke of Berwick that he had heard from Lord Mar, in case of any untoward event happening to the Chevalier de St. Georges, the partisans of the Stuart cause and the troops under their command had received orders to proclaim Anna Queen of Sicily, Queen of England.²

This was not the only time that Perrone alluded

¹ *Relazioni Diplomatiche*, vol. i.

² *Ibid.*, vol. ii., 1715-17.

to this rumour, and at the commencement of 1716, when the Chevalier's position became desperate, the attention of Victor Amadeus was again drawn to the fact that the claims of Anna d'Orléans to the throne of England seemed to be gaining ground by the following curious letter from Perrone :—

“A certain M. Pouille, a Scotch gentleman, asked me to grant him an interview, and stated that as he was on the point of crossing the sea to join the Chevalier, he appealed to your Majesty, as being the most prosperous Sovereign in Europe, to give the Stuart Prince some financial aid. This gentleman recalled the fact that it is to your Majesty's interest to assist the Pretender to ascend the throne of his ancestors, as after him there is no denying that the succession falls on the Queen of Sicily and her descendants. I replied that I was well aware of the proximity of birth between your Majesty and King James, and I also knew that your Majesty bears him great esteem and affection, but the last war had greatly exhausted your Majesty's finances, which made it impossible to offer the money required for present needs. Report says that England was on the point of declaring war against France out of revenge that the Duc d'Orléans should have facilitated the Pretender's voyage to Scotland, but it was hard to believe this, as by doing so England would have obliged France openly to declare herself an ally of King James.”¹

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. ii.

The revival of Queen Anna's claims to the throne of Great Britain, so energetically insisted on by her in days gone by, came too late to inspire her with any enthusiasm, and Victor Amadeus took these isolated assurances of interest in her succession for what they were worth. He was too much occupied in following events bearing on Sicily, and was too astute to do anything to mar the position he had made for himself in Europe by openly espousing the Stuart cause. The death of Louis XIV., September 1st, 1715, and the Regency of the Duc d'Orléans had again thrown Europe in a state of tension. It was therefore necessary for Savoy to be on her guard, and to avoid, if possible, getting implicated in any political entanglement. For these reasons Victor Amadeus approved of Perrone's diplomatic reply to the Scotchman, and commented on the incident in the following letter written from the Veneria, February, 1716:—

“We highly commend your prudent and judicious treatment of the request made by the Scotch gentleman. If similar propositions are made in future, you must, as in this case, elude the subject, and let it be clearly understood that on no account do we intend to take part in any such undertakings.”¹

Perrone's able administration of the affairs of Savoy in Paris came to an end in the month of March. He had filled the difficult position imposed on him with admirable dexterity, and while maintaining a friendly

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. ii.

footing with Lord Stair, he had shown proper deference to the exiled Stuart Court, and had never neglected any occasion of acquainting the Chevalier de St. Georges of the sympathy and interest felt for him by Victor Amadeus. The Marquis d'Entremont had been appointed to succeed Perrone as Ambassador, and on the eve of his departure from Paris the former Minister inquired of Victor Amadeus if he was to take leave of the Queen of England; at the same time he warned the King that Lord Stair had become of late very critical of any attentions shown to Her Majesty. Victor Amadeus, in reply to this question, wrote to Perrone as follows:—

“In answer to your inquiry as to whether you should visit the Queen of England before your departure, we do not make any opposition. It is an act of courtesy that could not easily be dispensed with, still more, as you were received by her on your arrival. You will therefore carry out this matter of pure formality, remaining at St. Germain no longer than necessary, and without entering into discussions with any of the Court. It might even be advisable that you should say a word beforehand to Milord Stair of your proposed visit, so as to anticipate any umbrage that might ensue, though such an occurrence would be most unreasonable on his part.”¹

Perrone's audience with the Queen Mary Beatrice took place on May 22nd at Chaillot, the house of refuge where during the last years of her sad life she

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. ii.

found some consolation and repose. The Minister described his farewell interview with the exiled Queen to Victor Amadeus in the following words :—

“I have been to-day to Chaillot to take my leave of the Queen of England. I have been instructed to write that Her Majesty is most sensible of the proofs you give of your remembrance and friendship for her. The Queen is sincerely attached to your Majesty and the Queen of Sicily, and during the illness of the Prince of Piedmont she had never failed to pray that his life might be spared. This Queen, who inhabits a convent, has no gentlemen, only women in her suite. My visit was very short, and could not possibly have caused any suspicion.¹

In the recently published Stuart Papers further light is thrown on the indecisions manifested by Victor Amadeus on the line he should follow in regard to the Chevalier's affairs. That James experienced some disappointment at the King of Sicily's evasive replies is shown by the correspondence which passed between them, though according to M. de Mirepoix, an adherent of the Chevalier's, the fault was partly due to James himself, to whom he wrote the following words of advice :—

“ 1716, *June 22nd*, PARIS.

“ M. de Mirepoix (Magny) to James III.

“ It appears to me that one of the chief powers has been a little neglected, which had more interest

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. ii.

in assisting you, and which is almost the only one in a condition to supply you with money, I mean the King of Sicily. This appears to me to be the almost only good resource that can be discerned. At present the Emperor is what is most to be dreaded by that King, and the latter being incapable by himself to resist open force, and being unable to expect assistance from France, has only two things to do, as far as can be judged, one to foment the Turkish war as far as he can, and the other to detach England from the Emperor's side, that the latter may not assist him with ships to get at him, an object obtainable only by a change of Government of England. It seems that the declaration of the alliance between that State and the Emperor ought to be a still keener spur to that King, for there is every appearance that by that treaty England will have abandoned him to the Emperor, at least unless that Prince, who, doubtless, has seen the storm coming, and who is an expert politician, has not taken his measures beforehand, and made a secret arrangement with the Emperor, not seeing how to avoid it, perhaps even by the mediation of England, who, by the treaty of peace, is bound to support the King of Sicily, it being well understood that on that supposition the indemnity for him could only fall upon France. This is the only thing to be feared therein, of which, however, there is not much appearance. You will remember, and Monsieur le D. D. (? Ormonde) can bear me witness, that I have urged long since that someone should be sent to the King of Sicily. Perhaps it is too late to do so, but I see nothing else to try, for, in believing one can judge

his real thoughts either by his silence on the letters written to him, or by the canal of his ministers, there is a risk of being deceived. . . ."¹

M. de Mirepoix bore the reputation of a man of mediocre intelligence and of most limited capacities, and though at a later date he was named Maréchal de France, and appointed Ambassador to the Courts of Vienna and St. James, these privileges were always considered a recognition of the attachment of Louis XV. to his wife and not due to his merits. The confidence that James placed in him was often criticised by the Chevalier's partisans, but on this occasion the wisdom of his counsel could not be disputed, and James, feeling he should have made more direct appeals to his cousins in Savoy, despatched one of his messengers to Turin with the following orders :—

“ *June, 1716.*

“ James III. to Mr. Bagnall. Instructions.

“ You are to go forthwith to the King of Sicily's Court, where you are to deliver our letter to our cousin, the Queen, and represent to her that we have but too good ground to apprehend that we shall be very soon forced to leave our present residence by those who have many ways in their power to do it, our enemies having prevailed with them, and that we should be obliged to reside somewhere in Italy. You are to do your utmost to con-

¹ Historical Manuscripts Commission, Stuart Papers, preserved at Windsor Castle, 1904, vol. ii. p. 225.

vince her of the prejudice it would be to us to go far into Italy, and therefore entreat her friendship with her husband, that he may allow us to reside somewhere in his territories, which, we hope, as the affairs of Europe now stand, could be of no prejudice to him, and a very great obligation to us. It shall be no occasion of any charge to the King of Sicily, and should he have occasion for men, we can assure him of many of our subjects entering his service. You are not to own your being sent by us to any but the Queen herself, and such as she directs, and are to follow her orders in speaking of your message to the King or any of his ministers. . . . In case of your not succeeding in getting a place for our residence agreed to there, you are to propose to the Queen her husband's taking into his service some of our subjects, who have followed us from Britain, and also to represent the great occasion we have for money at this time for supporting many of all ranks of our subjects, whom we cannot abandon, they having lost all on our account, and entreat her good offices with her husband for his assistance therein. . . ."¹

Victor Amadeus was too much engrossed in his own concerns, entailing the probable loss of Sicily, to respond to this appeal for protection, and a renewal of the Chevalier's assurance that should he have no heirs the throne of England devolved on the Queen of Sicily and the Prince of Piedmont, given at a time when his own prospects were such that most countries

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

refused him any refuge, was a promise shorn of all its lustre. It was also a contingency that the Jacobites were most anxious to avoid, for the possibility of the succession passing to the House of Savoy destroyed their hopes of seeing a Stuart king on the throne of Great Britain. Therefore the chief preoccupation of the zealous supporters of the Stuart cause was that the Chevalier should marry without delay.¹

Mr. Bagnall was, though unwillingly, forced to admit that his mission had failed on all the points insisted on by the Chevalier. In his first letter, addressed to the Duke of Mar, on the subject he states :—

“I am sorry there is no way of serving Mr. Freeman (James), but I perceived it is as I guessed. Truby (Sicily) has carried it against him. I am grown weary of this place, where there is no diversion at all, and design to leave to-day.”

The other letter, written to the Chevalier the same day, is still more explicit on the King of Sicily's refusal to assist an exiled Sovereign without a home.

“*July 8th, 1716.*

“The Queen, having read your letter, made great professions of her readiness to serve you, but said the necessity the King was under of keeping fair with the Elector on account of Sicily would not, she feared, permit him to comply with what was desired, that she would speak to him notwithstanding. . . .

¹ *Ibid.*, Preface, p. xxxii.

"The day sennight that I had been presented to the King the person who had introduced me asked me if I would go to Court. The Queen then told me she had considered of your letter, that when mention was made last winter of this same affair the King found it was impossible for him to consent to it, and that he even desired, if you were obliged to retire into Italy, and to pass that way, that your stay might be as short as could be, and that he might be excused from seeing you. . . . I then proposed the providing for some of these who were forced to follow you in the King's troops. She answered he could not take them directly from Avignon, but gave some hopes that something might be done for them. . . . She gave no answer as to giving money at present, but said that she would write to the Queen (Mary of Modena). I made the same proposals about the officers and money to the King. He refused both, and said that his situation was such that he could not disoblige England. He mentioned his apprehensions of the Emperor, and said he hoped you would not desire things of him now that would incapacitate him from serving you effectually when the occasion offered, which he should be very ready to do ; that Sicily was rather a burden to him than an advantage, being obliged to maintain 12,000 men there, and that therefore he had nothing to spare."¹

The Court at Turin remained plunged in mourning for an indefinite period of time, and as the months sped by there were no signs of renewed animation.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

As if by tacit consent, no one appeared to wish to lift the veil of gloom that now hung over the palace. The Queen, whose health was gradually declining, was as seldom there as possible, and sought the more retired life of Rivoli, or the Veneria, where she was frequently joined by the King, who devoted most of his time to the administration of the affairs of his kingdom, and to endeavouring to come to an understanding with the Holy See. Long disputes with the Pope had led to vacancies in the livings for the last thirty years. Only one bishop was left in all his States : the religion of the people was consequently totally neglected. Though it was a lengthy affair and required great diplomacy, after some years Victor Amadeus was to be congratulated in obtaining from Benedict XIII. the rights of disposing of the ecclesiastical benefices of his States, with the exception of the bishoprics of Casal, Acqui, and Alexandria.¹

A new source of domestic trouble now arose that affected both the King and the Queen, namely, the unsatisfactory conduct of Prince Victor of Carignan. For a long time the Prince's dissolute and extravagant habits had been a subject of the King's disapprobation ; and Victor Amadeus had openly expressed to his cousin his displeasure on a mode of living so unworthy of the position he occupied. The undesirable traits of the Prince's character came out soon after his marriage with Mademoiselle di Susa, and she, instead of influencing him to better ways,

¹ *Costa de Beauregard*, Appendix, p. 414.

encouraged him in dissipations that led to the King's perpetual reprimands. For a certain time the young Prince submitted to the constant reproofs of his august relative, and contented himself with treating the reproaches levied on him by Victor Amadeus with indifference ; but, finally, he lost patience and fled to France, from whence all supplications, menaces, and the sequestration of his goods were powerless to induce him to reconsider his hasty step. In the hopes that wiser reflections would prevail, and with a view to deterring him from settling in France, Victor Amadeus imposed on him the incognito of M. de Basque. This last attempt to compel the Prince to submit was as unsuccessful as all those previously made. He proved obdurate to any appeal, and entirely cut himself adrift from all his family by persuading his wife to join him in Paris, where, following in her mother's footsteps, she revived the scandals attached to the Contessa di Verrua's name by drawing attention to her own.¹

The Queen could not be absolutely indifferent to this renewal of domestic annoyances, for besides being unpleasantly reminded of all she had suffered during Madame di Verrua's reign at Court, it also grieved her to witness the grief of the parents, whose despair she found the harder to console, as it was impossible to condone the conduct of their son. The Queen personally was deeply hurt that Mademoiselle di Susa, towards whom she had shown great attention

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 440.

and kindness, should have abandoned so thoughtlessly those who had been her best friends, and wilfully ruined her career.

In consequence of this breach with Prince Victor of Carignan, Victor Amadeus, after his anger had cooled, began to reflect that were Charles Emmanuel, his only remaining son, known in the family as Carlino, to die, the next heir was the Prince who had irreparably quarrelled with his family and had recently deserted his country. The King had always felt an antipathy for Carlino, but under the influence of this disastrous state of affairs, and still smarting with the heartless ingratitude of Prince Victor's conduct, Victor Amadeus considered it incumbent that he should interest himself personally in Carlino's instruction and show some care for his son's future.

Stern duty alone moved Victor Amadeus to this decision. All his hopes had been founded on the late Prince of Piedmont, whose intelligence and charming nature had been as attractive as his good looks, whereas poor Carlino was painfully plain. He was humpbacked, and amongst other physical infirmities had a goitre. When a child his health was so delicate, that it had never been expected he would attain the years of manhood.

This pitiable contrast to his elder brother, instead of exciting his father's compassion, irritated Victor Amadeus to such an extent that he never lost an opportunity for making disparaging remarks on Carlino, and no boyhood can have been more tragic

than was his. Humiliated and mortified at his abject appearance, he experienced the greatest terror of his father, who took no trouble to hide the aversion he felt for his deformed son. Many details on the harshness and the unnecessary humiliations with which Victor Amadeus treated Carlino are related by Blondel, the French Chargé d'Affaires at Turin during the last years of the King's reign. This Minister, many years younger than Victor Amadeus, had ingratiated himself in the King's confidence to an unusual degree, and he enjoyed greater intimacy at Victor Amadeus' Court than any of his predecessors. Consequently he was a constant spectator of all that succeeded at Court, and his *Mémoires* of the daily incidents that occurred are invaluable chronicles of the dramatic scenes with which the King's life closed. Referring to the disputes he had witnessed between Carlino and his father, Blondel mentions the tears constantly shed by the boy at his lessons and studies, when, through fear more than from ignorance, he failed to reply to the questions put to him by Victor Amadeus in an imperious voice.¹

This growing discord between the King and his son was a source of great sorrow to the Queen, and it distressed her all the more as she saw how ineffectual were her attempts to lead to a better understanding on either side. Her heart ached for all that

¹ *Anecdotes sur la Cour de Sardaigne*, par M. de Blondel, Chargé d'Affaires de France à Turin sous les Règnes de Victor Amédée II. et Charles Emmanuel III.

Carlino had to bear from his father's incessant reproofs, while her incapacity to win the boy's confidence and his want of response to all the love she showed him added to her sorrow. Naturally timid and bashful, Carlino, completely cowed by the harsh treatment to which he was daily subjected, seemed incapable of attributing kind motives to anyone, and suspicious of all who approached him, even of his mother, he buried his grievances in taciturn and moody reserve.

Nor were at this time the reports from Sicily conducive to improve the King's temper or to make him more lenient to his son's shortcomings. Ever since he had left the island the Sicilians returned to their old grievance against being ruled by a Viceroy, and further encroachments on their independence by the Pope served as a fresh reason for their resentment at the absence of the King who had been selected to govern them. This growing feeling of discontent was fomented by Spain and Austria for their own ends, and they encouraged the King's increasing unpopularity amongst his subjects of Southern Italy. All this added to the danger that the King was doing his best to avert, and in April, 1718, Victor Amadeus, in writing to Maffei the Viceroy, prognosticated evil in the following words: "It has come to our knowledge that England and France, in concert with other powers, wish to bring about peace between the Emperor and Spain, which will be to our disadvantage, as it will entail depriving us of Sicily. It will be handed to the Emperor, and Sardinia with the

title of King of Sardinia will be substituted for our possession. I leave you to imagine with what feelings I give you this news.”¹

Though Victor Amadeus wrote in these desponding terms to Maffei, he did not intend relinquishing his hold on Sicily without a struggle, and amongst the documents relating to this interesting episode in the history of Savoy none are more curious than those published in the previously cited collection giving evidence of the means resorted to by the King to satisfy his thirst for authentic information on a matter of such vital importance to his country. His Minister in Paris having informed him that the Contessa di Verrua (who had not abandoned her old love of mixing up in political affairs) was spreading a report stated to have been given her by the Duc de Bourbon that the Regent intended offering Sardinia to Victor Amadeus in exchange for Sicily, the King wrote the following: “We cannot believe that in his own interests the Duc d’Orléans would do anything so prejudicial to us. But it would not be as easy of accomplishment as he imagines it to be. We do not think it probable that the Regent betrayed the real secret to the Duc de Bourbon, or, if he did, that the latter confided it to the Contessa di Verrua. Still, as it is essential to clear up this doubt, we think the best way of entering on a subject requiring so much delicacy is that you should manage a tête-à-tête with the Duc d’Orléans, and take him by surprise by re-

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 420.

peating to him what was told you as mere talk, to which you attach no importance beyond fearing lest it should reach our ears. A few such words would be sufficient to force him to answer you. You will judge if he is sincere by the time he takes to reply, and also by his manner, which will be embarrassed or not according to whether he is equivocating or speaking the truth. You must closely notice every change of expression on his face, also his gestures and general attitude. Remember that the success of the discovery will depend on the skill with which you follow every movement of the Regent. We have every confidence you will execute it according to our intentions.

“TURIN, *December 25th*, 1717.”¹

In spite of assurances from the Triple Alliance formed by England, France, and Holland that the conditions agreed to at Utrecht would suffer no change, the occupation of Sicily by Spanish troops July 5th, 1718, put an end to all further hopes of a pacific solution. Maffei, who for some time past had made ineffectual appeals to Victor Amadeus for means to enable him to fortify his position, found himself quite unprepared for any resistance. The Viceroy was not long to perceive that the Sicilians had no intention of standing by their King, but as the Spaniards approached Palermo they offered all the assistance in their power to the invaders. Such being the case, Maffei considered it more prudent to retire into the centre of the island in the hopes of

¹ *Relazioni Diplomatiche*, vol. iii.

being better able to defend those parts. Before doing so, he issued a proclamation calling all the nobility to arms within twelve days ; but a deputation of barons represented to the Viceroy that the time mentioned was too short to enable them to collect arms and horses. Though firmly convinced it was but a pretext for an indefinite delay, Maffei had no means of insisting on a response to his summons, and was compelled to agree that the levying of troops should be prorogued for one month. He next tried to obtain supplies from the richest commercial houses in Palermo, but he only met with refusals under one form or another, and even the mayor, who was asked the loan of 25,000 scudi, excused himself on the plea that he required whatever he could dispose of for the use of the town.

In face of all this systematic opposition to afford him any aid, Maffei, though loath to do so, had to accept the position forced on him, and as Palermo was already in possession of the Spaniards, he proceeded to Syracuse accompanied by his wife carried in a litter escorted by a few servants and soldiers. So insufficient were the means provided by Victor Amadeus for his Court in Sicily, that the ministers and those Savoyards who held posts in the King's service were seen leaving the country on mules without saddles or harness ; whilst being unable to pay for necessary transports to convey their goods, they had been forced to leave all they possessed in deposit,

either in the monasteries at Palermo or to the care of some of the private families.

La Lumia, in his work on Sicily under the reign of Victor Amadeus, gives a melancholy description of this undignified departure of the King's representative, and relates the discomfort that the Viceroy and the rest of the Court suffered in their tedious progress, lasting several days, over rough country badly supplied with water. One night, while bivouacking in an abandoned part of the island, they were deserted by their escort of peasant soldiers engaged to serve as guides, and the fugitives were left to find the rest of the way as best they could; besides other dangers was added that of falling into the hands of banditti and armed bands, from whom they found great difficulty in escaping.¹

Thus closed the short reign of Victor Amadeus in Sicily. Unwilling though the King was to admit the necessity of doing so, he saw that without support he was not in a position to enforce opposition, and on November 10th, 1718, circumstances obliged him to agree to the conditions drawn up by the Quadruple Alliance, by which Sicily passed out of his possession into that of the Emperor, and in its place Sardinia was offered for his acceptance.

Muratori states that for a long time the King was unable to resign himself to the loss of Sicily, but at last, as it could not be altered, guided by the wisdom

¹ *La Sicilia sotto Amedeo ii.*, chap. iv. p. 5, La Lumia.

that dictated most of his actions, he tried to show his approbation of what was irrevocable.¹

On November 27th the King officially announced to the Marquis d'Entremont in Paris the cession of the kingdom of Sicily, and wrote to him as follows :—

“ We wish to inform you that we have substituted the title of King of Sardinia for that of Sicily, and we have sent to the Court of Vienna to concert as to all that is required of us to give up the island to the Emperor. In regard of our seals with which the ratification of our title was confirmed, we intend to preserve the black eagle in addition to our arms of Sardinia, not because it relates to Sicily, but for the reason that it is the most ancient emblem of our House. Amongst our predecessors who bore it, Charles I. and Emmanuel Philibert always carried it on their shields.”²

Having brought to a close all the business connected with the transference of possessions, the King, who had no wish to go to Sardinia himself, appointed a Viceroy, the Barone di S. Remigio, to represent him in his new territory. Victor Amadeus brought to the Viceroy's notice the necessity of directing affairs so as to content everyone, without entering into party questions raised by adherents of former Governments, whether Spanish or Austrian. The task devolving on the Viceroy was by no means easy of accom-

¹ *Annali*, MDCCXVIII.

² *Relazioni Diplomatiche*, vol. iii. Appendix B.



By courtesy of the Principe di Scalea

MEDALS STRUCK IN SICILY TO COMMEMORATE THE CORONATION
OF VICTOR AMADEUS II.

Facing p. 480

plishment. Political discords of long standing had fomented private feuds, and dastardly deeds of vengeance had been allowed to go unpunished by former rulers. Consequently the public ways were unsafe, and absolute lawlessness prevailed. The funds of the island were at a low ebb, and the scarcity of troops made the work of bringing it to a habitable state all the harder. The progress was slow, and it took many years to accomplish ; but the patience and discretion shown in the administration of justice appealed to the warm hearts of the Sardinians, who, by acting in sympathy with the Viceroy, considerably lightened his burden, and their loyal devotion to the House of Savoy amply repaid the labour they had cost.

The transaction of all these negotiations had somewhat reanimated the Court of Turin, but matters having again assumed a peaceful air, it now returned to its dull routine, out of which the Queen's apathy and listlessness seemed unwilling to be roused.

The death of Queen Mary Beatrice at St. Germain in that year added to Queen Anna's depression, and made a great break in the interest that had been invariably displayed by the House of Stuart for Victor Amadeus. Though it has been shown that he did not always respond to their advances as openly as he wished it to be believed, he yet appreciated the clanship by which they were bound, and bore them sentiments akin to friendship as long as those sentiments did not clash with the projects he contemplated. He received the communication of the

close of the Queen's sad life with every trace of deep sorrow, and with keen interest read his Ambassador's despatches relating to the event. In the first letter announcing the fact, d'Entremont said he was waiting for orders from King Victor concerning the mourning to be worn, but meanwhile he was following the decision taken by the King of France, and would commence wearing it at once. A few days later the Ambassador wrote again on the same subject, and said:—

“It is reported that the Queen of England has left the King of France the arrears due to her of her dowry from England, valued at 30,000,000 francs. The Court of St. James has not put on mourning; to avoid having to do so the Regent was requested by King George not to send him any official statement of the Queen's death. Milord Stair only wore it as long as this Court did, which was for three weeks, orders having been issued to shorten it by half the time originally decided on. I have not followed this example, and shall wait till I receive your Majesty's orders.”¹

The marriage of Prince Charles Emmanuel in 1722, arranged for him by his father, made a slight break in the dull monotony that oppressed the Court of Turin. The bride chosen by Victor Amadeus as suitable to be his son's wife was Princess Christina, daughter of Theodore of Bavaria, Count Palatine of

¹ *Ibid.*, vol. iii.

the Rhine. The Princess could lay no claim to any special qualities, and was looked on by the Court of Turin as a person of no note. Nevertheless the few months of marriage with her were always remembered by Carlino as the least unhappy of his life, and she had sufficient character to show her dislike to the condescension with which she was treated by Victor Amadeus, and determined to show her opposition to it. The occasion occurred one day when he asked her whether she, the daughter of a simple Count Palatine, had ever dreamt such good fortune would befall her as to become Queen, upon which the Princess drew herself up, and in a tone of pride coldly informed the King that there was no reason that she should not have been even an Empress, as in her family there had been several Empresses as well as Queens.¹

This Princess, who, notwithstanding these slight differences between herself and her father-in-law, to whom she refused to submit, had been treated with great affection by himself and the Queen, did not live long to enjoy her new position, and died in March, 1723, after giving birth to a son.

This death again affected the Court, and especially the Queen, whose affectionate regret for her daughter-in-law was mingled with gratitude for the rays of happiness she had brought to her son's life, so bereft of brightness. The little Duca d'Aosta, whose delicate constitution needed great care and attention, now

¹ *Mémoires de Blondel.*

became the Queen's sole remaining interest, and the love with which she had formerly tended her own children she lavishly bestowed on her grandson.

During the next few months death was never far absent from that saddened home at Turin, and each gap caused by the loss of those connected with the Queen opened the old wounds afresh.

Philippe d'Orléans, the Regent of France, died in the early part of 1723, and though the Queen knew her brother's grave failings and had but seldom seen him, she sincerely deplored his death.

In 1724 the Court was thrown into deeper mourning by the death of Madame Royale, who, at an advanced age, succumbed to paralysis. Questionable as her life had sometimes been, and insincere as she had often proved herself towards her son and his interests, she was, nevertheless, a personality, and both the King and Queen felt a great loneliness in their hearts the day that her eventful life closed.

Her admirers, who buried her faults and only remembered her virtues, pointed out the debt of gratitude owed her by the town. Madame Royale had founded the Academy of Sculpture and Painting, she had instituted the literary Academy, and it was due to her that the sum of 50,000 ducats was assigned to the Principe di Carignano, which enabled him to build the palace known by his name, and is one of the finest edifices in Turin. Without this assistance the Principe di Carignano could not have met the heavy expenses entailed by the construction

of this palatial residence. As heir-apparent to the Duchy it was considered right the Duke's successor should inhabit a residence worthy of his position.

The list of Madame Royale's charitable donations is endless. She founded the Church of St. Joseph with the annexed convent, and on being told of the terrible neglect shown to the prisoners in various parts of the Duchy, she personally occupied herself towards improving their conditions, morally and materially, and in Asti gave an annual stipend to the Fathers for the celebration of Mass on the feast days at which the prisoners could assist.

She was always ready to come to the assistance of painters, musicians, and all artists whose want of means hindered their advance in art, and she was a generous benefactress to those in need. By these and similar acts of kindness, Madame Royale ingratiated herself with the poor of Turin, and we read that after a bad illness in 1719, when it was known that she had gone to the Sanctuary of the Consolata to return thanks for her restoration to health, all the people followed her to the church, and with cries of "Viva!" pressed round her to show their affection and devotion.¹

In the imposing ceremonies during Holy Week, in which the whole Court took part, Madame Royale never failed to visit on foot all the churches of the town, dressed in the garb of a penitent, the *cilice*² under her garment of sackcloth. This and other

¹ Claretta, p. 70. ² A hair shirt worn by those doing penance.

instances of her piety remained deeply impressed on the minds of her people.¹

The *mémoires* of the times relating to her death state that "she was embalmed, and dressed in the garb of a Carmelite nun, after which she was exposed in a room, draped in black with silver decorations, lit up by a vast number of torches. On the evening of the 19th March she was conveyed to San Giovanni in a hearse drawn by eight horses, caparisoned in black, followed by 500 of the poor of Turin dressed in mourning, bearing lighted torches. The rest of the cortège was composed of religious corporations and the nobility, accompanied by their valets and pages, all in deep black."²

The strict discipline to which Carlino was subjected by his father had been to some degree modified during the short period of the Prince's matrimonial life. This reprieve, however, ended with the first days of mourning for the Princess, and Victor Amadeus took up his former position of the hard task-master, and Carlino was again the victim for his reproofs and rebuffs.

Nothing that he did pleased his exacting parent, and Carlino became more and more embittered against the injustice of his father's anger; and though too much overawed to defend himself openly, he carefully treasured in his memory the misery of his early life, which sowed the seeds of his future reprehensible

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

² MS. of the day. Biblioteca del Re, Torino.

conduct and prepared the ground for his unfilial behaviour at a later date.

Victor Amadeus never let a chance slip that enabled him to find fault. Having noticed that at audiences given to foreigners Carlino remained silent, he was told that he should be more affable, and show interest in their pursuits, question them on their travels, and express his wish to make their visit to Turin pleasant, so that the reputation of hospitality and cordiality always accorded to strangers at the Court of Turin might be maintained. In order to apply to a practical purpose the science of mathematics, the Prince, accompanied by the most skilful officers, was sent to the different fortifications, where on the spot he had to work out different problems. He was expected to visit all the garrisons, examine each soldier in turn, find out if they had any cause for complaint, and taste the bread to see if it was of the right quality.

Carlino fulfilled all these exigencies to the letter, but in making his reports to his father he was so laconic and unenthusiastic that the King often lost his temper, and still more chilled his discouraged son.

All these duties imposed on the Prince were practical and wise foundations for his future reign, and had Victor Amadeus but adopted a less offensive mode of imparting such invaluable instruction to Carlino, his son, instead of nurturing bitter feelings against his father, would have owed him a deep debt of gratitude.

The King was determined that no time should be lost in finding another wife for Carlino, and the period of strict mourning was barely over before the King and Prince Charles Emmanuel left Turin for the waters of Evian, and from thence proceeded to Thonon in Chablais to receive Princess Polixena of Hesse Rheinfeld, who was destined to be Carlino's second wife. Whether from motives of health or from disinclination to take part in any festive gatherings, the Queen did not accompany the King and his son, but remained at Rivoli to look after the fragile little Duke, and also to prepare the apartment for the reception of her daughter-in-law. The Queen wrote to Carlino she was looking forward to his approval of the arrangements she had made, and as he expressed the wish to return home as soon as possible, she told him she had hurried on the workmen, who had completed the work in eight days.

As soon as the Queen heard that the bride and bridegroom had arrived in the States of Savoy, she wrote to her daughter-in-law one of those charming letters, the simple wording of which appealed so touchingly to those to whom they were addressed. The letter ran as follows: "MY DEAR DAUGHTER,—It was with extreme joy that I heard of your happy arrival at Thonon, but I greatly regret not to have shared with the King the pleasure of embracing you. As each moment passes and brings you nearer to me, so does my impatience increase to meet, and to show you the tenderness I feel

for you. I fear three weeks must elapse before that pleasure is granted me, as probably a procession will take place at Chambéry ; meanwhile, my dearest daughter, I assure you of my deep affection, and if it pleases you to write to me, pray do so without compliment, as I wish no restraint between us, for I look on you as my own daughter.”¹

Princess Polixena quite responded to the Queen’s happy anticipations ; her beauty and gentleness won all hearts, and her devotion to Carlino filled the Queen with gladness as she saw that the Princess brought him some of the affection he so ardently longed for.

Carlino was in his twenty-fourth year, and might well have expected to be free of tutelage ; but neither his age nor his second marriage were capable of obtaining for him the emancipation for which he pined. On the contrary, his father not only kept him as busily employed as heretofore, but, instead of diminishing his occupations, Victor Amadeus plied him with fresh duties, and expected Carlino to make himself cognizant of all the manufactories of his country, and left it to him to keep accounts of the cost of production and expenditure, with the corresponding returns. Victor Amadeus had but recently established silk and woollen manufactures, and had engaged men from Lyons to work the looms, the management of which devolved on Carlino.²

¹ Letter of 24th August, 1724. *Anna di Savoia*, p. 450.

² *Mémoires de Blondel*.

The Prince felt in a happier mood while performing the numerous occupations insisted on by his father, as after a hard day's toil he knew that instead of the scowls that usually greeted his return he would find his home lit up with the gentle smiles of the Princess. But before long even this consolation was denied him. The attachment of the young people for each other was unfavourably viewed by the King, and, moved by a feeling of jealousy lest the Princess should encroach on the severe authority he exercised over his son, under one pretext or another he continually contrived to part them ; and while Carlino received orders for immediate departure in moody silence, many were the tears shed by the bride at the incessant separations from her husband, who was called away by the King to accompany him on various journeys.

The Princess made the Queen the confidante of her sorrows, and excited her sympathy by her tale of distress. During the frequent absence of Carlino, his mother wrote him long letters showing the affection she bore to the Princess of Piedmont, and her wish to be of comfort to her daughter-in-law.

In August, 1725, a new trouble fell on the Queen by the death of the little Duca d'Aosta, who, in spite of the incessant care bestowed on him by his grandmother, never outgrew his delicacy. The Queen accepted his death with that resignation which seemed to be her portion, and her first anxiety was lest the King, who was away at the time,

should be seriously affected on the loss of a direct heir.

The Queen bore in mind the alarming symptoms to which the King had given way on the death of their eldest son, and in a letter she wrote to Carlino she described her fears that the King would be sincerely grieved at the news of the child's death; and the thoughts of his grief so agitated her that she was divided by the wish to see the King again and her alarm that their first meeting would be very emotional both to Victor Amadeus and herself.

There was something in the tone of this letter, and the one that followed a few days later, in which the Queen betrayed her doubts that she would ever see either the King or Carlino again, that struck the first note of serious alarm on her health. The decline had been coming on for some time past, but her fortitude under suffering had been so admirable that she deceived everyone round her, and even those who knew her best were incapable of realising the control that her spirit of self-sacrifice enabled her for so long to impose on herself; and not till the rapid collapse revealed how far more serious had been her condition than had ever been imagined did she receive some of the attention and care that she had so freely bestowed on others.

Each letter she addressed to Carlino pointed to increased gravity of symptoms. In one she complained of extreme weakness and of being almost unable to keep on her feet, and in another letter she

begged him to excuse her for not writing more than a few lines owing to a very bad night, in which she had suffered acutely, "but," she added, "all will be as God wills, and I am more resigned on the matter of my health than on many other things that trouble me."¹

Even now, when she knew herself to be gradually approaching the threshold of another life, she put her own concerns on one side and, as much as her strength allowed her, devoted herself to her disconsolate daughter-in-law, and did all she could to make her life away from Carlino less lonely.

On being informed by the doctors that they considered the Princess to be in a delicate state of health and advised her a course of baths and waters more easily obtainable at Turin than at Rivoli, the Queen did not hesitate, entirely against her own inclinations, to return with her to town. The oppression that came over her when residing in that palace haunted with memories of the past is expressed in the following words she wrote to Carlino :—

"We came here yesterday, my dear son. My sorrow is cruelly revived on finding myself back in this abandoned palace, and I fear we may have to remain here for some time."²

The Queen and the Princess spent much of their time in the Villa della Regina, and it pleased her

¹ *Anna di Savoia*, p. 453.

² Letter of August 18th, *Anna di Savoia*, p. 454.

to find that her daughter-in-law shared her taste for the country, and entered into the Queen's love for the seclusion and beauty of the villa and its grounds. Almost one of the last letters the Queen wrote to Carlino refers to an afternoon she and the Princess had passed in the villa, and she told him how charming it was for her to have his wife's companionship ; she was so appreciative of any little thing done to amuse her. "Even a trifle pleases her," said the Queen, "and I do my best to give her such distractions as I can to help her to support your absence."¹

In this way the months sped by, and though the Queen lived for another two years, it was but a prolongation of suffering from severe heart attacks, to which she became more and more subject. But in spite of all the discomfort of a lingering illness, the last period of the Queen's life was one of peace and repose. Surrounded by affection and devotion to which she had so often been a stranger, she basked in the love of her daughter-in-law who had so endeared herself to her heart ; and the announcement of the birth of a son to the Princess and Carlino shortly before her end tranquillised her mind and brought content and repose to her last days.

As long as the Queen was physically capable, she turned a deaf ear to her own sufferings, and the closing hours of her existence were solely occupied with the good she could do to others. Death, how-

¹ *Ibid.*

ever, was hovering near, and on the 15th August, 1728, pain conquered her brave spirit ; and from that date till the 26th she lay most of the time unconscious, save for the intervals when acute attacks of heart and brain drove her into delirium.

The doctor, who attended her during her last illness, stated :—

“Her Majesty remained chiefly in a somnolent state, and with difficulty could barely stammer a few words. By feeling her pulse I noticed a tremor in her arm, her face was quite changed, her hands and feet were like ice. All remedies were powerless to relieve her ; little by little she lost consciousness and power of speech. She gave up her soul to God at seven in the morning, August 26th.”¹

The words of the Abbé della Novalesa, who pronounced her funeral oration in the Cathedral of Turin, were a just appreciation of a good and true woman, whose kind heart had dictated an intense love of living for others only. Such a remarkable combination of qualities as possessed by Anna d'Orléans is hard to find. Infinitely superior to those who, incapable of attaining her high standard, tried to detract from her virtues, she calmly pursued the path in which she had elected to walk from the day she plighted her troth to Victor Amadeus, and, to quote the words of the Abbé : “Sad as were most of the years of her life, however long the duration

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 457.

of sorrow, and however unexpected the way by which it came, tender and sensitive as she was, her noble soul was never cast down, nor did her confidence in God ever waver. It may be said that her afflictions served as so many steps to mount from one virtue to another."¹

For some time previous to her death the Queen had been tormented by the fear that, according to custom, her body would be embalmed. Her natural modesty and delicacy shrank against this operation, and she repeatedly expressed her desire that it should be avoided in her case. She confided her preoccupation on this matter to her confessor, and earnestly entreated him to use his influence to obtain this concession.

The Queen's desires were duly respected, and after lying in state for one day only, her mortal remains were transported to the Cathedral of San Giovanni, her resting-place for many years, till the basilica of the Superga was completed. The first stone of the mausoleum had been laid in 1717, when the work of erection was commenced by Juvara, the Sicilian architect, who had accompanied Victor Amadeus from Sicily; but it was not till the year 1786 that Anna d'Orléans, Queen of Sicily, whose soul had soared to the realms of peace, rested by the side of King Victor Amadeus in the crypt of the Superga.

On the death in 1728 of Anna d'Orléans, Queen of Sardinia, the representation of the Stuart connec-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 458.

tion in the House of Savoy was vested in her son, Prince Charles Emmanuel, afterwards Duke Charles Emmanuel III., and proceeded in direct line until the death of Charles Felix, who died in 1831, without male issue. The crown of Sardinia consequently passed to the junior line of Savoy-Carignan. The lineal succession of Stuart Princes was to be found in the daughter of Victor Emmanuel I. He in 1790 had married Maria Theresa, daughter of the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria and Maria Beatrice, Duchess of Modena, by whom it passed to their daughter Beatrice, and through her marriage with Francis IV., Duke of Modena (himself a descendant of James I.), into his line. Their son Francis V., Duke of Modena, the lineal heir of the Stuarts, married March, 1842, Adelgonda, daughter of King Louis I. of Bavaria. At his death, in 1875, the male line of Modena became extinct. He left no children, therefore his niece, Maria Theresa Henrietta Dorothea, born in 1849, married in 1868 to Prince Louis of Bavaria, is the actual representative of the House of Stuart.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROLOGUE TO THE DRAMA

Sad results at the loss of the Queen—Deterioration of the King's judgment—He reflects on a second marriage—He proposes to the Contessa di S. Sebastiano—The King claims absolute secrecy in the marriage—Permission is obtained from the Pope—It takes place in the Chapel Royal—The King announces it to his son—The marriage excites but little sympathy—The King meditates abdication—Is advised against taking such a step—He announces his decision to his ministers—The despair of Charles Emmanuel—The motives that dictated the King's determination—He officially announces his marriage—The title bestowed on the Contessa—Victor Amadeus leaves for Chambéry—He takes the title of King Victor.

THE life of the late Queen had been passed with so much modesty and such a complete absence of self-assertion, that the extent of the influence she had exercised was not recognised while she lived ; and the successive false steps taken by the King, which cast a reflection on the concluding years of his reign, are to be attributed chiefly to the irreparable loss he sustained in her death. In many moments of difficulty the Queen had quietly, yet firmly, directed the King's decision for the best. Her passive acceptance of situations, most painful to herself, did not infer approbation, but profound wisdom ; her rectitude of conduct and the candour of her nature, combined with the simple dignity that accompanied all her

actions, induced a feeling of respect, and raised the Court of Turin to the high position it enjoyed.

The closing chapters of a great reign are like the echo of a sad refrain, and the tinge of melancholy that accompanies the task of drawing attention to the lengthening shadows and shortening days of the decline of life, is deepened when physical decay is attended with a lessening of the mental faculties producing errors of judgment, and a tendency to return to all the foibles of youth.

The King's second marriage, abdication, subsequent regrets at the step taken, and his son's revolt, are all tragic incidents leading up to the *dénouement* attending his death. These strange events are so many acts of a drama that occurred within the four intervening years of the Queen's death and his own, and thrill the spectator by the rapidity with which one startling situation pressed on another.

The impressive description of the most curious part in the history relating to the King's brilliant and eventful career is supplied by the daily journal kept by the Conte de Blondel, the French Minister at Turin, the value of whose testimony is enhanced as the *mémoires* were never intended to be published, but were only written for his own use and that of a few friends. The publication of a diary under these conditions doubtless accounts for opinions and judgments on people being occasionally expressed less judiciously than might otherwise have been the case. These, however, are but slight drawbacks compared

to the advantage to be obtained from a plain, unbiassed statement of facts referring to the last memorable epoch of the King's life.

Concerning the second marriage of Victor Amadeus with the Contessa di S. Sebastiano, Blondel relates that at the age of forty-five she still preserved many traces of her former good looks. She was of a gay and bright nature, her manners were gentle and engaging, and coquettish though she might have been, she had always attracted notice for her irreproachable conduct.

The Contessa, who in the King's youth had been maid of honour to Madame Royale—then Regent—was the daughter of the Conte di Cumiana, who had been Grand Master at Court, and in 1666 was named Knight of the Annunziata. His family, of Turin origin, had possessed the fief of Cumiana for over four hundred years, and members of it had, on frequent occasions, received posts of distinction in embassies, and appointments of magistracy.¹

As already stated in the early part of this history, Mademoiselle di Cumiana's black eyes, wavy brown hair, and irrepressible vivacity wrought serious havoc in the youthful heart of Victor Amadeus, but the imminent danger of the position was averted by the presence of mind of Madame Royale, who promptly sent for the Conte Novarina di S. Sebastiano, and informed him that it was her will he should marry her maid of honour. The marriage took place according to Madame Royale's desire, and the Contessa and her

¹ Costa de Beauregard, Appendix, 414.

husband led a retired life in his estates till 1723, in which year the Count died.

It was generally supposed that all correspondence and friendship on the part of Victor Amadeus with the Contessa had ceased during these years, but such would not seem to have been the case; and though during the Queen's life the King may judiciously have concealed any appearance of interest in the Contessa's welfare, she must have been still present to his mind, for on hearing that after her husband's death the Contessa had been left in very reduced circumstances, Victor Amadeus offered her the position of lady-in-waiting to Princess Polixena, and later on promoted her to be the Princess's lady of the bedchamber. This appointment brought the Contessa into direct contact with the King, and afforded many opportunities for a revival of reminiscences between them. Victor Amadeus often escaped from the troublesome questions that perpetually harassed him in his busy life, to seek solace in the Contessa's rooms and talk over days long gone by. Absorbed by the attraction of dwelling on the past, the intervening gulf that separated former from present days was forgotten in the fascination of the subject, and heedless of the danger closing round him, Victor Amadeus was only aware of the pleasure afforded him by the society of a very charming woman. The sympathy she showed in his moments of anxiety, and the interest with which she listened to his future aspirations, bridged over the lapse of time, and deluded by the spell she

deftly cast, he dismissed from his mind the disagreeable fact that the best part of their lives was over and felt the charm of reviving an idyll of the past. The Contessa however was practical. She had profited by the experience of the intermediate years that had rolled by, and bearing in mind the abrupt termination of her sanguine expectations as a girl to secure the Prince's affection, was determined that reminiscences of what had been should only serve as stepping-stones to a definite conclusion, and must not be allowed to linger in the insecure quicksands of courtship.

The Contessa felt that the intimate tone the King had assumed with her had lasted sufficiently long, and feeling the necessity for some collusion in the serious design she meditated, she confided to the Abbé Boggio di Sangano, in whom the King placed great confidence, her wish that he should signify to His Majesty the advisability of considering the question of remarriage with someone who like herself, through long friendship, would be a support and comfort to him in his declining years.

On hearing this proposition made by the Contessa, the Abbé, totally unprepared for such a confidence, exclaimed that she could not realise with what a heavy cross she proposed to burden herself, and further reflections he made against entertaining an idea so opposed to her own interests would have discouraged anyone less blinded than Madame di S. Sebastiano ; but in her eagerness to be Queen she

swept on one side all wise remonstrances to deter her from insisting on so foolish a step, and refused to discuss a subject on which she had already made up her mind.

The Contessa had not long to wait to assure herself that the Abbé had carried out the mission confided to him, as but a few days after this conversation, Victor Amadeus, in the course of a visit he paid her, pressed his advances to an extent that the Contessa thought it right to draw herself up, and in a tone of indignation expressed her disapproval, and declared that for the future she would never trust herself to use the private staircases, as hitherto had been her habit. The King paused a moment before replying to this threat: he then said, "You remember Madame de Maintenon?" "What does your Majesty mean?" inquired the Contessa in a trembling voice. "That I intend you to be my wife," was the King's laconic answer.¹

Madame di S. Sebastiano, having in this way extracted from Victor Amadeus the proposal on which she had built her hopes, and brought the vista of marriage within the range of probability, must have been grievously disappointed if she expected to be an object of general attention at the prospect of her elevation to the throne, for Blondel describes the various ruses employed by the King to ensure the greatest secrecy in the preparations made for the marriage. Whatever the Minister heard on the subject

¹ *Mémoires de Blondel.*

was confided to him by the Comtesse de Passeran, a relation of Madame di S. Sebastiano, who told him she had been charged with all the commissions, and under her name linen had been ordered from Holland, lace from Brussels and Valenciennes, and materials from Lyons. A silver dinner service for eighteen had been entrusted to one of the principal silversmiths in Turin, who had left Lyons to establish himself in Piedmont under the King's protection.

In spite of all the precautions taken to guarantee secrecy, much to the King's annoyance rumours began to spread on his proposed marriage, and the assertions as to its accomplishment became so positive that one day, on the conclusion of Mass, Victor Amadeus entered the throne-room before retiring to his study as he usually did, and addressing the Court, he said: "Gentlemen, it is impossible for me to ignore the strange reports that are being spread relating to myself. If I cannot claim respect for my advanced years, at least it would be as well that my character should not be lightly discussed, for it may lead me to take steps against those who are spreading these libels. For this time I will not seek to know who these may be, but I advise them for their own good not to give rein to their imagination and to keep silence."

Blondel assisted at this open denial of the engagement between the King and the Contessa, and felt very uncomfortable as he listened to the menacing tone adopted by Victor Amadeus, for he had made

so sure of the authenticity of the statement that he had already written to Cardinal Fleury the current reports. Greatly annoyed at having been misled, he reproached Comtesse Passeran for having supplied him with information so publicly denied by the King. In spite of the Minister's remarks on her indiscretion, the Comtesse still affirmed that she was perfectly accurate in her statements, and expressed surprise that the French Minister, who was well aware of the King's ability for dissimulation, should set any value on his address to his Court. Blondel, moved by the wish to exculpate the King from insincerity, was still only half convinced of the assurances given by the Comtesse, but when, in order to prove her veracity, she showed him letters of credit to pay for the various commissions executed by her, with orders to say they were for a friend of hers in Milan belonging to the richest and greatest of the Milanese families, the Minister could no longer disguise his regret that Victor Amadeus, who honoured him with many proofs of friendship, should stoop to deceptions unworthy of his great name, and lower his dignity by subterfuges on any matter personal to himself.

In the month of June, 1730, the King, just before the death of Benedict XIII., obtained the Pope's permission for a marriage between a widower of the Order of St. Maurice and a widow, the rules of which Order strictly prohibited similar marriages. The names of the widower and widow desirous of entering for the second time in the bonds of marriage

were not mentioned in the request, and the Pope, unsuspecting the illustrious signatures that would fill the blank spaces, handed the commission to the Marchese d'Ormea, who was in Rome on other diplomatic missions with the Pope, and was as ignorant as the Pontiff himself for whom this permission was required.

The marriage took place on August 12th, and on that day the Prince of Piedmont, for the first time during the progress of a comedy that had excited great comment and not a little disapprobation, received a verification from the King of what had been surmised. But even up to the last moment Victor Amadeus pursued his love for mystification, and employed the following complicated means for acquainting his son of news that could not be otherwise than most unacceptable to the Prince. Carlino, who was residing at the Palace of Valentino, received a message that his wife at Turin had been given permission by the King to go and dine with her husband, and the Princess was somewhat surprised on being told that the Contessa di S. Sebastiano offered her apologies, but owing to a very bad headache, which had obliged her to go to bed, would be unable to assist at Her Royal Highness's toilette. At midday Victor Amadeus dined alone, and after giving orders that his carriage should be in readiness at three, he retired to his study, pleading urgent private affairs. He was shortly joined by the Contessa, and here, in the presence of his Secre-

tary and valet, they were married by his Court Chaplain.

At the conclusion of this strange ceremony both the King and his bride returned by the back stairs to their separate apartments, the King leaving the door of his room wide open to show that he was alone. At three o'clock he got into his carriage, and, accompanied only by his gentleman-in-waiting and one servant, without the usual escort, he drove to the Valentino. Blondel, who happened to meet him on the stairs with three Englishmen he had already presented to the King the same morning, said he had never seen Victor Amadeus in better spirits. He seemed brimming over with good humour, was ready to make jokes, and laughingly said to the Envoy, "Wherever I go we seem to meet."

On entering the salon he kissed the Princess of Piedmont, and then drew Carlino apart and announced his marriage to the Prince. Carlino dutifully said he could only express his pleasure on any event that might contribute to his father's happiness. The King then begged his son to guess who was the lady he had made his wife. After a short silence the Prince confessed his inability to hazard a suggestion, and at the mention of the Contessa's name by his father, gave a start back. Slight as the movement was, the King perceived it and remarked, "Carlino, I fear you do not approve of my choice?" but the Prince had had time to recover himself, and replied that such was not the case, as he knew the Contessa to be a

lady of great merit. This answer seemed to satisfy Victor Amadeus, and he closed the interview, saying, "You are quite right ; you will see before long how greatly she will have contributed to your happiness as well as mine."

During this time the Contessa, who, after the clandestine marriage, had returned to her apartment, ordered her supper for eight o'clock, and then instructed her maid to open the large chests in which lay the trousseau prepared for her by the Comtesse de Passeran. One of the boxes contained all the house and bed linen, from which she chose the finest, and bid her maid prepare the bed with the sheets and pillow-cases richly trimmed with lace and ornamented with pink ribbons. From another box the articles of her personal linen were carefully unpacked and looked over. After picking out the most becoming of the pretty caps, the Contessa went to bed. At ten o'clock there was a knock at the door, and, as she expected the King, the maid was told by her mistress to go and see who was there.

Accustomed as the household was to see the King in his well-known fur dressing-gown, lined with silk, that served for every season of the year, in which he was generally enveloped when going round the apartments of his palace, the maid, who did not expect him at her mistress's door at that hour, was totally unprepared for the strange figure in white fur, resembling a polar bear ; a sugar-loaf cap, trimmed with flame-coloured ribbons, completed the strange costume.

The King's valet stood behind him holding a dark lantern, which added to the weird effect, and so startled the maid that she dropped her candlestick and rushed screaming to her room.¹

If these details border on the grotesque, still they serve to show to what trivialities the Court of Turin had descended, from which it had been saved during the life of Anna d'Orléans. They also denote how powerful had been the command she had exercised over the King, whose weak points had, to a great extent, been kept under control by the strong conviction he had that she would view with contempt any loss of dignity in his character, for which she professed so deep an admiration; consequently the necessity in which he found himself to live up as much as was possible to the ideal she had formed of him had led to the best results. Unfortunately the rank weeds, that had been kept down by care and attention, sprang up again as soon as the hand that had lovingly suppressed them was no longer there to bestow the labour needed; left to themselves, they struck deeper root and spread all the faster with the strength of age.

Even after his marriage was accomplished, the King was still intent on keeping it secret, and the next day he went alone to the Veneria, and stayed there a few days till the whole Court went to Rivoli, and the Contessa resumed her services with the Princess of Piedmont.

¹ *Mémoires, ibid.*

The Contessa had accepted without demur the obligations of secrecy imposed on her by Victor Amadeus regarding the marriage. She thought it was but another of the originalities to which all those living with him must accommodate themselves, but though she waited in silence his good pleasure that her alliance with him should be recognised in a way more advantageous to herself, she was quite unprepared for a decision taken by Victor Amadeus, by which her prospects of future power and grandeur crumbled away to dust. It is hard to define for how long a time the King had been pursued with the idea of abdication, but Blondel states that a year previous to taking this step Victor Amadeus had made certain allusions, to which at the time, the Minister had not attached much importance, and he only remembered them after the abdication had taken place. He specially recalled to mind the incident that occurred on a day that he accompanied the King to Mass. On reaching the chapel door, His Majesty, apparently giving expression to some thoughts that occupied his mind, laid both hands on the Minister's shoulders, and said: "I am considered very ambitious, and have been condemned as seeking troubles for my own aggrandisement, but here, in the presence of the Holy Sindone, I swear to you that it will not be long before it will be seen that I am only anxious for repose and a retreat."¹

In 1729 the King had treated the subject seriously

¹ *Mémoires, ibid.*

with the Abbé di Boggio di Sangano, in whom he confided with greater freedom, and was more explicit in his intentions. The Abbé employed every argument that came to his mind to dissuade Victor Amadeus from committing so fatal an error, but to every objection raised by the prelate, the King had a rejoinder ready in support of his views. He brought forward the names of all the monarchs who had abdicated, even going back to the days of the Cæsars, to prove his case. Finding all dissuasions unavailing, the Abbé, in despair of moving the King from his stern resolve, suggested to Victor Amadeus the advisability of making a trial before taking the irremediable step, and strongly advised him to leave the management of affairs to Prince Charles Emmanuel, and to go himself to some quiet place where he could pass a certain time in solitude and reflection.

But this suggestion only exasperated the King, and he exclaimed to the Abbé, and to others who had assisted at the last part of this interview: "No, it is not usual to me, nor could I adapt myself to do anything by halves; my motto has always been, everything or nothing. I might not approve of the way my son conducted affairs; disagreements would then arise; the unity of rule would be shattered, and the dignity of the crown offended."

Victor Amadeus then reflected a moment, and turning to the Abbé added: "I have duly considered and thought over what I am about to do; I should

have abdicated a long time since ; regard for the Queen alone deterred my doing so. After her death affairs at Rome again postponed my carrying out my decision. I have passed the *neuvaine* of Christmas at Rivoli ; I prayed earnestly and implored light from Heaven, and am confirmed in my resolution.”¹

In defence of the King's steadfast refusal to listen to any appeals to reason, it has been urged that his health, which had almost miraculously borne up against the hard life he had always led, was all the same, greatly broken ; the incessant attacks of fever to which he was so subject had considerably reduced his strength, and there were symptoms of a general weakening of faculties. As he looked round on the prosperous conditions of his country, the flourishing state of his treasury and private affairs, the good footing of his army, he felt he had earned a needed repose, and contemplated with satisfaction the prospect of a quiet life, undisturbed by the anxieties incumbent on his position as Sovereign.

Against these very comprehensible, if mistaken, reasons for discarding the obligations he had sworn to observe towards his country, some historians lay to his charge less disinterested motives.

Since the Peace of Utrecht, whilst Victor Amadeus had turned to good account the blessings of peace, great changes had occurred, which, under the actual condition of affairs, did not render the chances of

¹ Carutti, p. 466.

renewed warfare absolutely impossible. The death of Francis, Duke of Parma, in 1727, roused the attention of Spain to the fact that his brother, who had succeeded him, was too serious an invalid to hope to enjoy a long reign. This life alone stood between the infante Don Carlos of Spain and his claims to the dukedom of Parma, which would entail a renewed conflict between Spain and Austria.

The expectation of war agitated all the Cabinets of Europe, and Victor Amadeus shared in the general feeling of anxiety ; he foresaw that the assertion of the Queen of Spain's rights to the possessions of the Farnese would lead to a return of the Bourbons in Italy, and that he would be drawn into a new phase of political differences.

These misgivings were confirmed in June, 1730. It is stated that Victor Amadeus at that time accepted a sum of money from the Emperor, and, under the proviso that he and his descendants would be governors of the Milanese country to all perpetuity, bound himself never to separate his interests from those of Austria. It is further stated that but a few days had elapsed after this agreement into which he had entered with Austria, before he had a secret interview at Genoa with the Spanish Minister, by whom he was offered the provinces of Novarese and Parmasana, on condition, in the event of war, that he should declare himself for the Bourbons. The King as readily gave his promise of assistance to this proposal as to the other, and it was to avoid

the predicament in which he consequently found himself, that he decided to abdicate before complications should arise that might land him in difficulties with both countries.¹

Whether these less laudable motives guided his decision, or the more excusable reasons bearing on his health, the King's will was irrevocable, and from August 12th to September 3rd he was occupied in preparing the Act of Abdication. The different clauses were most minutely drawn up; and the advice to his son was very elaborate. The Prince was specially recommended to follow the counsels of the Marquis de St. Thomas, who, for forty years, had given exceptional proofs of honesty, discretion, and fidelity, and his attention was called to the services rendered by the Marchese d'Ormea. The Baron de Rhébinder was appointed Marshal and Generalissimo of the forces.

The prominent position given to the Marchese d'Ormea ever since he had been employed by the King on diplomatic missions with the Pope had roused considerable discontent at Court. He was a man of fine and imposing presence, but of no birth, and till created by the King Marchese d'Ormea, for the occasion of his first mission to Rome, had occupied quite a subordinate position in an office at Susa. He carried an impression of frankness and openness, in which he was totally lacking, and when, in addition to other proofs of royal favour, he was appointed

¹ Costa de Beauregard, p. 130.

Minister General of the Finances, suspicions got abroad that his reputation was hardly such as to merit so responsible a post.

After the final dispositions had been taken, the King, on September 3rd, 1730, convoked the Princes, the Knights of the Annunziata, the High Chancellor, the Archbishop of Turin, the Ministers and Secretaries of State, and all the most important officials of Turin to Rivoli at three o'clock that afternoon.

The Act of the King's abdication in favour of his son, the Prince of Piedmont, was read to the assemblage by the Secretary of State, the Marchese del Borgo. At the conclusion of an announcement that save to the Prince of Piedmont and the Marchese, came as a thunderbolt to the other august personages, who had been completely in ignorance of the reason of the convocation, and were consequently greatly upset, the King proceeded to make a short speech. He explained that his age and infirmities amply condoned the decision he had taken, but he had every confidence in his son, who had inherited the necessary qualifications to ensure wise government of his country. The King then took the Prince by the hand and proceeded to present him to everyone individually ; while doing so he related to him the services that had been rendered to the Crown by each person present. This graceful tribute, and the courage shown by the King in this moment of intense emotion, moved everyone to tears.

Towards evening the two Kings and the Court



*From a portrait in the Monastery of Sta. Maria at Pinerolo
Obtained through the Barone A. Manno*

THE MARCHESA DI SPIGNO

Facing p 514

assisted at Benediction in the Church of the Cappuccini of Rivoli. When the priest reciting the prayers arrived at the words "Domine salvum fac Regem," he paused, not knowing which name to pronounce, but in a clear voice, to be heard by all, Victor Amadeus said, "Carolus Emanuelem," and saved the prelate's dilemma.

Victor Amadeus had waited till his abdication was accomplished to declare his marriage with the Contessa di S. Sebastiano. This he now did officially, and he made her a present of the Marquisate of Spigno. The land had belonged to the Comte de Sales, a natural brother of Victor Amadeus, who had died in great poverty, and all he had possessed was sold on his death to pay his debts. The property conferred on the Contessa the title of Marchesa di Spigno, under which name she was known in future.

At the conclusion of this eventful day, Victor Amadeus sent for Blondel, who found the ex-King alone with his son. He kept the French Minister in long and earnest conversation, and begged him to inform the King of France of what had taken place, and to assure him that the good intelligence that now prevailed between the Courts of Versailles and Turin would be maintained by his son, who would be always at His Majesty's service. Victor Amadeus then turned to Charles Emmanuel and said: "Carlino, to-morrow morning I leave for Chambéry as a private individual. I only take with me four footmen, a valet, two cooks, and 150,000 livres of

revenue. I have no longer any direction in affairs but I beg you to send me a weekly despatch of what is taking place. I shall like to follow the events of Europe ; it will also afford me some distraction in my retreat."

Victor Amadeus at first stipulated that his letters should be addressed to "Vittorio di Savoia," but he at last complied to persuasion, and accepted the suggestion to adopt the title of "Re Vittorio."

This interview had lasted over three hours, and on saying farewell to Blondel, King Victor kissed him on the eyes and extracted a promise from the Minister that he should stop at Chambéry each time he passed between France and Piedmont.

Tears were in King Victor's eyes as the next morning he left the grounds of Rivoli for his self-imposed exile. Charles Emmanuel, who accompanied his father part of the way, again implored him to abandon his unwise decision and to stay and reign, but Victor Amadeus was deaf to all entreaties. He repressed his emotion on bidding his son farewell, and refused the offer of a squadron of troops waiting in readiness to act as escort. For sole answer to this act of thoughtfulness on the part of Charles Emmanuel, he pointed to his valets and said, "These are more than sufficient for a simple country squire."¹

It was with almost childish petulance that Victor Amadeus insisted on carrying out a decision so

¹ Carutti, p. 474.

opposed to the wishes of his son and his ministers. This regrettable obstinacy, which he mistook for determination, opened up a new era of discord between himself and Charles Emmanuel, and led to the tragic events that ended only with King Victor's death.

CHAPTER IX

THE RUPTURE OF THE TWO KINGS PAINFUL SCENES BETWEEN FATHER AND SON

The old home of the Dukes of Savoy—The Abbey of Haute Combe—King Victor's early regrets at his abdication—Life at the Court of Turin under the young King—He visits his father—Signs of unfriendly feelings between King Victor and his son—Ormea foment the quarrel—King Victor influenced by the Marchesa to return to Turin—The King prepares Moncalieri for his father's reception—Increasing ill-humour of Victor Amadeus—His threats to reclaim the throne—Deliberations taken by the ministers—The King consents to his father's arrest.

ON the evening of September 7th, for the second time in his life, Victor Amadeus entered the little town of Chambéry as a bridegroom, but the springtide of life that in 1684 had wafted promises of a roseate future to the bride and bridegroom was now replaced by the sad and mournful autumn which, unresponsive to the vain appeal to reanimate lost youth, refused to be the bearer of any message of hope to Victor Amadeus.

Instead of courting the greetings of the population, King Victor avoided the town and drove straight to the Castle, having previously declined to receive any deputation of the Senate or magistrates. On leaving his carriage before entering the Castle, he first

entered the chapel and remained there some time in prayer.

The Marchesa di Spigno had not travelled with him, but arrived the following day accompanied by her brother, the Conte di Cumiana, and her two maids. The King met her at the foot of the stairs, welcomed her affectionately, and conducted her to their apartments.

This return of King Victor to the former home of his ancestors recalled many associations of its former possessors and their deeds of valour. The château existed in the tenth century, under the reigns of the Kings of Burgundy ; and the large area of ground it occupied may be seen by one of the old round towers still to be noticed in the little street below the hill on which the principal part of the Castle stands. This round tower is built in on both sides by the gabled houses, and bears an inscription denoting that in 1440 it was used as a citadel. On the right hand under the old archway of the principal entrance to the château stands the Sainte Chapelle, in which the holy shroud was treasured by its owners until it was removed to Turin. The chapel has been greatly restored, but though it suffered on different occasions from fire, the old glass of the lancet windows still retains some of its bright colour. The large pew facing the altar bearing the name of the "Tribune des Ducs," and the cross and arms of Savoy worked in the carpet spread before the altar, bring to recollection the warriors of the House of Savoy in centuries gone by and identify

the Princes of the present day with the long roll of ancestral heroes.

The towers actually standing are, La Tour Carrée, the construction of which dates from 1439 ; La Tour de la Trésorerie, an octagonal tower that dominates the quadrangle of the château ; and La Grande Tour, thirty mètres high : this is the oldest part of the château, dating from the eleventh or twelfth century.

There is a great charm in the site of the old château of which the present préfecture now forms part. Standing on the terrace through the principal entrance under the cool shade of spreading trees, the horizon on one side is bounded by the characteristic outline of the Montagnes de la Bauge ; on the other lies the range of the Grande Chartreuse, whilst the high peak of La Dent du Chat completes the boundaries of the panorama.

Interesting as was the Château, and beautiful as were its immediate surroundings, every step of the whole country round is rich in memories bearing on the Ducal House of Savoy, none of which appeals more to admiration than Haute Combe, so called from the old French word "combe," signifying high or elevated, the former burial-place of the Dukes of Savoy. Situated below the Dent du Chat on a granite rock above the Lac de Bourget, the abbey and chapel were a fitting resting-place for the scions of a noble House. The beauties of the scenery and the deep sense of tranquillity induced by the placid repose of

the scene harmonised with the stateliness of the building, the interior of which was always spoken of as a treasure-house of priceless value. Built in the twelfth century by St. Bernard on this site granted him by Count Amadeus III., Haute Combe was not spared in the destructive work of the Convention after the execution of Louis XVI., when Savoy was occupied by French troops. The royal tombs were desecrated, the marbles and works of art in the chapel were ruthlessly broken up, and the valuable manuscripts and documents in the library were used either to light fires or torn up as waste-paper. When the reign of violence had run its course, those who succeeded to these plunderers were indifferent to the havoc wrought in the burial-place of a princely house, and not till 1815, when Savoy was again in the hands of her former owners, were the roofs repaired and the crumbling walls propped up. Charles Felix, who then reigned, was imbued with the desire to restore Haute Combe to some of its former grandeur, and exerted himself seriously to this undertaking. When the necessary repairs to the building were completed he turned his attention to beautifying the interior, and hung up some portraits of the most notable of his ancestors, many of which still remain to recall to those who visit the possession of the Dukes of Savoy the trace of their footsteps in the State they so nobly served.

In the florid but debased Gothic chapel, erected by Charles Felix, is to be seen his monument in front

of the altar in that part of the chapel reserved for the royal tombs. The one erected to his wife, Queen Marie Christine, daughter of Ferdinand IV., King of Naples, is placed by his side. The chapel comprises three naves ; but the profusion of ornaments, monuments, and relics confuses the spectator, and creates the first impression of hopeless inability to distinguish one object from another amid the chaos of marble. Most of the seventeen monuments and statues left standing out of the forty-eight erected to the Princes interred at Haute Combe are reproductions of the originals. The tomb of Boniface, Queen Eleanor's uncle, made Archbishop of Canterbury by Henry III., and many others of the ancient lineage of sleeping Princes from the days of Amadeus III., attract interest. In the cloisters, part of which date from the sixteenth century, some of the débris of sculpture and fragments were put together at the time of the restoration, and are still to be seen.

Haute Combe is now confided to the care of Cistercian monks. A protocol at the time of the cession of Savoy to France in 1860 granted the Sovereigns of Italy possession over the abbey founded by their illustrious House ; and the entrance to the secluded sanctuary is guarded by an official in the uniform of his country.

All these landmarks of the past history of King Victor's ancestors failed to arouse any enthusiasm in the Marchesa di Spigno, and with studied indifference she expressed no approbation either on the home to

which she had been brought by Victor Amadeus, or on any historical traditions connected with the place.

Blondel states that there was no doubt she had been kept by the King in complete ignorance on his intention to abdicate, the decision of which had been taken some time before he proposed to the Marchesa. She therefore felt she had been misled and cheated of the position to which she had aspired, and with these sentiments rankling in her mind it could not be expected that the romantic charms of Chambéry or reminiscences of the Dukes of Savoy would compensate her for the loss of the palace at Turin and the Court life to which she was accustomed.

Whilst the King was trying to accommodate himself to his new circumstances and attempting to win the Marchesa's approbation on an action which now that it was final, he himself felt doubts, Charles Emmanuel, who in former days had suffered from his father's reproofs on his tendency to prodigality and a love of luxury, had lost no time in furnishing and decorating the palace at Turin in accordance with his taste. The Queen's rooms were handsomely done up in crimson damask and gold, and his own suite were in yellow, relieved with silver. All the royal carriages were renewed, and in his own person he was most fastidious and luxurious in his requirements.

The function of taking the oath of fidelity by the people and the army was carried out in great pomp,

and the public entry into the town was both gorgeous and imposing.

This young King, who had always borne the reputation of being half-witted and incapable of practical judgment, now that he was left to himself showed evidences of his careful training, and led to the belief that he had a natural disposition to govern with prudence and tact. He seemed fired with the wish to identify himself with all the interests and traditional amusements of the people, and announced his intention of attending the fair at Alessandria in October. This fair was an annual occurrence, and attracted crowds from all the neighbouring towns. The King having been told that all the great ladies of Milan, Genoa, Parma, and Florence had secured rooms for the show, chose six of the most beautiful ladies of his Court and named them to accompany the Queen. He also gave out that he wished it to be generally known that during his residence at Alessandria he would give audiences to all those who wished it.

On the return of the Court from the fair, life at Turin was more brilliant than it had been for many a year, and the suppers, masked balls, and sledging parties seemed a resuscitation of Court life as it used to be in the early days of the reign of Victor Amadeus.

During the remainder of the year 1730, and the commencement of 1731, perfect harmony existed between King Victor and his son. Charles Emmanuel never took any decision of importance without con-

sulting his father, and there was no reason that the friendly terms with which they transacted business together might not have been unduly prolonged could Ormea's pernicious influence have been averted. In his double position of Minister of the Finances and Secretary of State he felt that as long as father and son arranged affairs so amicably between them he could not obtain the independence which was the principal objective of his actions. Ormea was most unpopular with the other ministers. They eyed with suspicion the inordinate luxury displayed by the Secretary of State, who competed with his master in carriages, silver, and furniture, and kept open house for all the strangers passing through Turin as well as for the society of the place ; but, what affected them more than all this outlay, was the certainty that he estranged the King from them and shook his confidence in their services towards their master. The Marquis de St. Thomas, whose invaluable attachment to the royal family had been specially mentioned by King Victor, was the principal object of Ormea's perjuries.

Blondel states that it was not long before he received orders that in future he was only to transact business with the Marchese del Borgo, Under Secretary of Foreign Affairs ; the Marchese was purposely kept in ignorance of his duties, and could only give evasive answers to inquiries from the foreign ministers. When complaints were raised regarding the dilatory way affairs were conducted,

Ormea replied, "The scene of the puppet-show is laid at Turin, but the showman who works the marionettes is in Savoy."

Similar malicious remarks thrown in at the right moment hastened the rupture between the King and his father. Ormea's manners towards the ministers in office became more and more unbearable, and before long rumours most damaging to the Government spread to the ears of the public. It was unavoidable that the King likewise lost credit, and not without annoyance he perceived that he was fast being deprived of the confidence with which his subjects had treated him at the opening of his reign; and what was still more serious, it was beginning to be whispered in Europe that he was totally unfit for the government of a country.

Events fast tending to a crisis occurred at eight a.m. on the morning of February 5th, 1731, at the close of a masked ball given by the King, just as the last guests were leaving the palace. A courier, the bearer of ill news, arrived from Chambéry to inform Charles Emmanuel of King Victor's critical state of health following on convulsions and a sharp attack of fever. The report was sufficiently alarming to decide the King to prepare to start at once to see his father. Everything was ready, and he was on the point of doing so, when a second messenger arrived with an autograph letter from Victor Amadeus, reassuring the King on his health and imploring him not to run the risk of a journey in mid-winter.

The King was greatly touched by his father's kind solicitude, and replied that (though unwilling) he submitted to King Victor's wishes, but as soon as the roads were passable he would undertake the postponed journey. He also urged his father to consider the question of returning to Piedmont in such a place most suited to his choice; the climate would be better for his health than that of Chambéry, and his father's return would be of great consolation to himself.

In the month of March the King carried out his promise of joining his father, and the three weeks he passed with him at Chambéry were of mutual satisfaction to both father and son.

Ever since King Victor's illness, Ormea had taken this opportunity to suspend the weekly bulletin on political affairs, and discontinued to do so even after Victor Amadeus had recovered from his attack; for the Minister attributed this despatch to be one of the principal stumbling-blocks to the complete authority he aimed at asserting over the King. Charles Emmanuel knew how tenacious his father was as to being kept informed on political concerns, and on his return from Chambéry inquired one day if it was still sent regularly. Ormea answered that during King Victor's illness it would not have been safe to despatch papers relating to State affairs that might have fallen into undesirable hands, and now so long a period of time had elapsed since the last had been sent, it would be useless to take it up again. Un-

fortunately the King allowed himself to be persuaded by these plausible arguments ; he was quite unaware that his father had noticed this omission, and that even during his illness he had been fostering his dissatisfaction and rancour at the slight he considered offered him.

Accounts vary as to the means employed by Victor Amadeus to effect his departure from Chambéry. It is generally believed that the Marchesa never lost a chance of urging King Victor to leave the place he had selected for his home, and on his mentioning one day that he had given orders for repairs to be commenced in which the Castle stood greatly in need, she opposed this suggestion, and pointed out it was too completely in ruins ever to be habitable with any comfort, and she strongly advised him, instead of embarking in so heavy an expense, to return to Piedmont, where the climate was far better suited to his health.

King Victor was easily disposed to take the Marchesa's view regarding a scheme over which he had dwelt so long, and by her clever insistence that he should return to Italy, Victor Amadeus little by little banished from his mind all the difficulties of accomplishing so hazardous an enterprise, and became more and more bent on following his instincts.

It was while Victor Amadeus was in this unsatisfactory mood that the King, never suspecting that serious trouble was so near, having carried away the good impression of his last visit to his father, passed through Chambéry the end of July on his

way to Evian, where he had been ordered for the waters.

During this visit the first symptoms of a coolness between the two Kings was to be observed, and Charles Emmanuel found everything so unpleasant and different from his last visit, that, instead of remaining a fortnight, as he had intended, he left at the close of a very disagreeable interview with his father, in which King Victor had loudly condemned both his son and his ministers for their mismanagement of affairs. Charles Emmanuel was most distressed at the sudden rupture between himself and his father; all the more was it very painful to him, as he could not accuse himself of having been guilty of any misdemeanour to account for it. He was unaware that the Marchesa di Spigno had fanned the flame of discontent, and in order to relieve herself of her vexation at being condemned to live a dull life at Chambéry with King Victor, she had encouraged him in his regrets on the step he had taken, and incited him in his threats of annulling his decision.

Charles Emmanuel knew that but a short time previously King Victor had had an attack of apoplexy, and generously attributed his irascibility and unaccountable humour to the results of his illness.

As soon as Charles Emmanuel had left for Evian, Victor Amadeus decided to profit by his son's absence from Turin, and to precede him to the capital. It is stated that this determination on the part of King Victor was revealed to Charles Emmanuel by a priest

who inadvertently overheard the discussion that passed between Victor Amadeus and the Marchesa relating to their departure.

It had always been the custom, when the royalties went out for their daily drive, to throw open the Castle to enable visitors to see the apartments reserved for the use of the Dukes. On this occasion it chanced that King Victor and his wife returned much earlier than was usually the case, and in the hurry of the crowd to leave the Castle as quickly as possible, a young priest, a stranger to the place, got confused and was unable to find his way out. Being placed in this predicament, he hid behind a folding-door in hopes that an opportunity would soon present itself when he would be able to slip away unobserved. As it happened, this door was adjoining the room where Victor Amadeus and the Marchesa remained for a long time in animated conversation on the means and ways they intended to adopt for the journey, and their intentions as to the future when once back in Turin.

The priest was aghast at all he had overheard, and as soon as he was able to free himself from his perilous position, he reported what had come to his knowledge to his spiritual adviser at Chambéry, who strongly advised him to leave for Evian that night and to acquaint the King on this important information. An hour after this warning the young King was on horse-back, and, attended by a small escort, crossed the Petit St. Bernard to defend his rights at the same

moment as Victor Amadeus was advancing to contest them.¹

The fatal step having been taken, the precursor of all the misery to follow, Victor Amadeus felt ill at ease, and in spite of his wish to appear contented and reassured, was unable to conceal his anxiety. During the long hours of the daily stages he never broached the subject, but was buried in his own thoughts, out of which the Marchesa did not care to rouse him. Firm as she had been in her resolve that King Victor should return to Piedmont in order that he might resume the position he had voluntarily foregone, when she saw the evident doubts by which he was profoundly agitated, she began to reflect on the possible consequences of her temerity and injudicious interference.

The journey proceeded in absolute silence, and was not broken till they reached the highest part of the Mont Cenis and were commencing the descent. At this moment King Victor suddenly addressed his companion and accomplice of his designs, and asked her whether he should turn back or proceed. The Marchesa made no reply, and Victor Amadeus repeated the question, but she still remained silent. King Victor now lost his temper and angrily exclaimed: "Good heavens, Madame, when I ask for an answer I intend to have it; tell me what I am to do." Startled by King Victor's irritable mode of compelling her to give an opinion at such a crucial

¹ Costa de Beauregard, p. 143.

moment, the Marchesa said, "Your Majesty, to you it behoves to order: I have no right to offer any advice." The die was cast. Victor Amadeus huddled himself up still further in the corner of the carriage slowly descending the precipitous road, and never uttered another word until father and son both reached Turin within a few hours of each other.¹

Though greatly perturbed at the aspect of events, Charles Emmanuel bore in mind it had been his own proposition that his father should return to a more salubrious climate, and in order to stave off a crisis and in the hopes of calming King Victor's irritation, he personally superintended all the arrangements at Moncalieri that might conduce to his father's comfort; but when he proceeded there the day after King Victor's arrival, he found his father in a worse temper than when they had last parted, and was treated by him with absolute contempt. He spoke of the Queen as the "Princess of Piedmont," and as she took her place at table as Sovereign he pushed the stool prepared for the Marchesa di Spigno on one side and ordered that a seat should be given her identical with that of the Queen; he even noticed that her coffee was served in a special cup, to which he also raised objections, and requested that no difference should be observed between the two ladies in such respects.

From these unseemly acts of pettiness King Victor

¹ Carutti, p. 490.

proceeded to assume a tone of authority that began at last to raise alarm. He no longer concealed his annoyance at having been so mistaken as to abdicate, and openly declared that he looked upon the act as null and void. He stated that the country was going to ruin through bad government, and that he intended to impose his authority on his ministers and also on his son, who had always been in the habit of acquiescing to his father's will. As Victor Amadeus saw the dismay he was causing by his unjustifiable conduct, and witnessed the predicament in which he was placing the King and his Government, he gained still further confidence, and laughed ironically at the fear he had raised with only a cane in his hand, as since his return he had never worn his sword.

Several weeks had passed in this disturbing state of affairs, and the ministers, seeing no solution to a situation which promised to be very serious, they used their best endeavours with the King to take an urgent decision to end an impossible position. At each interview he had with his father they dreaded that he might be persuaded to sign a revocation of the Act of Abdication, and represented to the King the ridiculous part he would play in Europe should he be influenced to restore the throne to his father. In earnest tones they put before him the loss he was incurring of the estimation of his subjects, they warned him against increasing the reputation he already had for being pliable to everyone, and finally

they said, sooner than assist at such a humiliating scene and the consequences it would probably entail on the King himself, who would be left in the power of a madman, they asked permission to leave the country.

Owing to the pressure put on him, the King agreed to their requests so far as to avoid any further interviews with his father, and, heedless of the summons sent him by Victor Amadeus, failed to comply with the repeated messages urging him to go to Moncalieri.

Irritated all the more by the marked indifference shown by Charles Emmanuel to his authority, on September 26th Victor Amadeus sent for his confessor, the Abbé Boggio di Sangona, and, calling him into his private study, made him the confidant of all his complaints. King Victor threw the chief blame of his son's undutiful behaviour on the perfidious ministers, whose interest lay in alienating Charles Emmanuel from the duties he owed to his father. Becoming more excited as he proceeded to enumerate his grievances, Victor Amadeus concluded by saying that after having seriously reflected what was best to do, he had arrived at the conviction that he must either retire into a monastery or else go to Milan to request the Emperor to arbitrate in the case between himself and his son. His marriage prohibited his first proposal, therefore the latter course was the only one left for him to pursue.

The Abbé was greatly disturbed at hearing such

intentions on the part of King Victor, for he knew by experience that once he had an idea in his head nothing ever deterred him from putting it into practice ; but as far as lay in his power he implored and supplicated him, for the sake of his country he professed to love, to banish from his mind thoughts that would lead to indescribable harm.

Victor Amadeus replied that it was worthless counsellors such as Ormea who were ruining the country, and as long as Charles Emmanuel was in such bad hands no improvement in the situation was possible ; he then took a copy of the Act of Abdication lying on the table near him, and said : " I intend to annul this deed ; that will force my son to liberate himself from those miserable sycophants by whom he is governed. I beg you, M. l'Abbé, to write at my dictation the revocation of this Act."

The Abbé went on his knees and implored King Victor to save him from such a terrible task ; but Victor Amadeus was unmoved by all prayers and appeals, and told the prelate he should not leave the room until the document was drawn up. In it King Victor expressed his regrets that the kingdom he had remitted to his son's charge should have been so grossly mismanaged and badly administered, owing to which he felt himself compelled, for the well-being of his country, to annul the Act of Abdication of September, 1730 ; consequently he considered all the officials, ministers, and his subjects, bound to him by their oath of fidelity.

The Abbé was now allowed to leave, after having promised to return the next day and look through the paper before handing it to the ministers. The hour was so late when he reached Turin that the gates were closed, and not till the following morning could the Abbé relieve his conscience by going to Lanfranchi, the King's Secretary, and relating to him all that had occurred.

The King was at the Veneria, but was hastily sent for, and on being told of the approaching crisis entered into a lengthened consultation with Ormea. The Minister was well aware of the increasing complications of the situation, and being chiefly pre-occupied for his own safety, spared no pains to impress on the King the dangers by which he was beset. Prompted by the feeling of self-preservation, he even proposed to resign office, for he was constantly haunted by his last interview with King Victor, who had learnt how he had been served by a man who owed him his position and everything he possessed. In passionate terms the King expressed to Ormea his utter detestation of the treacherous conduct of which he, Ormea, had been guilty, and he announced that his hanging would be the first thing he would attend to when he was once more his own master.

Ormea was too great a coward not to be troubled at a menace that he knew would be an accomplished fact if King Victor had his way, and being absolutely convinced that the arrest of Victor Amadeus could

alone avert the danger he dreaded for himself, had already, unbeknown to the King, conferred with some accomplices how it could best be effected; and even before the last decisive Council held by the King and his ministers had agreed as to the steps to be taken regarding the complicated case, and had given orders that all the windows of Rivoli were to be barred and a moat dug before the entrance, so that a drawbridge should be the only means of entering the palace that henceforth was to be converted into a prison. Apparently the King was ignorant of Ormea's personal spite against his father. He therefore refused to consider his Minister's proposal of resignation, imagining it to have been suggested from motives of self-abnegation, as Ormea, convinced that it would not be accepted, had craftily insinuated that Charles Emmanuel might perchance more easily come to an understanding with his father should he, Ormea, resign his post.

The King was now fairly worn out with the struggles by which he was torn. On the one hand was strong filial attachment, on the other fear of the lowering clouds portending dire disaster, not only to himself, but to his country. In the whirl of contradictory thoughts agitating his brain he felt clearly his responsibilities to his people, and he knew that, if permitted, his father might be reinstated on the throne, but not in his people's estimation. It was not possible that the actual state of affairs should be prolonged. Popular discontent was rising, civil war

might ensue, and did he not follow the advice of his counsellors, he would be left alone to cope with all these obstacles. These distracting considerations offered no other solution than the one strongly urged by his ministers. As the strain became more intense, the timidity of the King's nature got the upper hand, and the terribly dramatic scene which followed was the result of his acquiescence to the wishes of others. Once the fatal word given, Charles Emmanuel was too alarmed at what he had done to take any further part in a plot to which he had unwillingly agreed, and preferred to ignore what means would be employed to put his own order into execution. This was left to those most antagonistic to Victor Amadeus; consequently the method pursued was most reprehensible, and Charles Emmanuel's decree was accomplished in a manner unnecessarily harsh.

On the King refusing to accept Ormea's resignation, the Minister said that according to his opinion King Victor's arrest was the only possible solution, and should be effected without loss of time. Charles Emmanuel was too agitated to suggest an opinion on the distressing situation, but he could not hear Ormea pronounce this sinister course as the sole remedy without a shudder. Unheeding the Minister's remonstrances, he sent Lanfranchi, his secretary, to Moncalieri to make one more attempt to induce his father to come to a reasonable understanding with him, but Victor Amadeus received his

son's messenger with cold indifference, and maintained that what he had said was irrevocable.

The King still felt a lingering desire to see his father personally, but this wish was overruled by Ormea and the other ministers, who insisted on the immediate assembly of a Council. This sat for many hours well into the night of September 27th.

The King, pale and anxious, presided, and commanded Ormea to give a resumé of the circumstances that had necessitated the Council. This task was a most grateful one to Ormea, who recapitulated the events following on the voluntary abdication of Victor Amadeus, his short retreat at Chambéry, and the scenes of violence that had lately taken place; he dwelt on the menaces addressed to the ministers and the consequences that must be expected should he return to power. With great bitterness he spoke of the Marchesa, whom he looked upon as King Victor's evil genius, and finally urged the importance of an immediate decision, as the deed of revocation was already written. Turning to the King, he asked him if he was prepared to face all the disasters that would occur should he flinch from accomplishing his duty.

This harangue met with the universal approval of the Council, and the order for King Victor's arrest was laid before the King, but Charles Emmanuel still hesitated. Ormea, in great fear that even now the King's vacillations might induce him to postpone signing the mandate, went up to him and said, "Your

Majesty, the life and honour of each one of us is implicated in your decision." During this moment of suspense a solemn silence reigned in the Council Chamber ; without another word Ormea placed the pen in the King's hand, and the deed committing his father to prison was endorsed by the son's signature. Charles Emmanuel then rose, and with a wave of the hand dismissed his ministers. The Queen entered the room, and while with bitter tears the King clasped her in his arms, Ormea took up the paper that guaranteed his own safety, and silently departed.¹

¹ Carutti, p. 502.

CHAPTER X

DEATH THE DELIVERER COMES TO THE RELEASE OF VICTOR AMADEUS

The arrest is carried out under Ormea's suggestion—The unnecessary severity displayed in the execution—The Marchesa is sent to a house of correction—King Victor is imprisoned at Rivoli—The King under Ormea's advice refuses to go to his father—Victor Amadeus is moved to Moncalieri—His close imprisonment—The Marchesa is finally restored to him—Repeated attacks of paralysis denote the approach of King Victor's death—His messages of pardon to his son—The King and Queen try to justify their conduct—Recapitulation of his father's great reign.

AT midnight, as soon as the King had dismissed the Council and with a troubled conscience had retired to his apartment, the palace of Moncalieri was invested with troops. In a prominent position Ormea could be seen, ready to make himself master of the boxes and papers belonging to Victor Amadeus, a duty he considered it incumbent to be performed by his hands alone. At one a.m. a company of grenadiers forced their way into the palace and proceeded to King Victor's room. The door was locked, and, all attempts to open it by means of false keys having failed, the carpenters of the regiment were called to break it down. Victor Amadeus was in a heavy sleep, but at the first noise the Marchesa di Spigno sprang out of bed and rushed to the door, where she

was met by the grenadiers, some with fixed bayonets and others with lighted torches.

Dreadfully scared at this alarming intrusion on their privacy, she fled to Victor Amadeus, and in a terrified voice exclaimed, "Oh, my King, we are lost!" King Victor, still half asleep, sat up in bed and asked the reason for this disturbance, upon which the colonel advanced, took King Victor's sword that was lying on the table, and read aloud the order signed by Charles Emmanuel.

During the reading of the warrant, Victor Amadeus was transfixed with consternation, and by the time the warrant for arrest had been read he was in a violent passion, almost too excited to express himself coherently, and experienced some difficulty in making it intelligible to the colonel that he had never dispensed his subjects from their oath of fidelity, and defied anyone to lay a hand on him.

A piteous scene then followed between Victor Amadeus and the Marchesa; she threw herself into his arms and clung to him in wild desperation. He clasped her to him with the strength of an enraged person, and it needed the strength of four officers to tear them apart. Even after they had been thus forcibly sundered the Marchesa had to be dragged by main force to her dressing-room. Here, in the presence of the grenadiers, who formed a circle round the room with fixed bayonets, she was ordered to dress herself. The officers stood by, each with a drawn sword in his hand.

Meanwhile Victor Amadeus, trembling with rage and agitation, his eyes starting out of his head, still sat on the edge of the bed staring at the blankets and sheets strewing the floor and the signs of violence wrought in the room ; turning to the men, he thus apostrophised them : “And you, my brave grenadiers, who have served me so faithfully, who have seen me many a time at your head, ready to risk my life with yours for the defence of my country, are you going to allow your King to be treated thus ? After having been your master, are you going to submit to my being your prisoner ? ”

This was the moment that had been foreseen and dreaded. It was well known that Victor Amadeus carried the love of his army, and one of the officers afterwards stated that they had great fears that the men would have responded to any appeal from their former King. Had there been the slightest movement in his favour the officers would have run their swords through the grenadiers ; but there was no need for alarm, absolute silence followed the piteous appeal.

The colonel then stepped forward and told Victor Amadeus that he must put on his clothes and follow him. King Victor absolutely refused to dress, and said he preferred to exhaust the ignominy of his position to the last dregs.

In this pitiable plight he was carried downstairs, where he perceived the guard of honour that had been there since his arrival at Moncalieri, and he

ironically called out to them, "I applaud your courage in having allowed me to be made prisoner. I prefer to believe that you have been surprised, and that it is not your fault"; and throwing them ten louis that he took out of a purse he was holding, he told them to drink to his health.

It was now three in the morning ; Victor Amadeus was placed in a carriage and the order to advance was given to a detachment of dragoons that formed part of the escort. So alarmed was Ormea on the possibility of a rising in King Victor's favour, that he had issued the most strict instructions to clear the road of any passers-by, the windows and doors of all the villages on the route were to be kept closed, and anyone infringing these orders was to be shot.

By the sad light of dawn, Rivoli, the scene of the proudest moments of King Victor's eventful career, was reached, and the gates of the palace were opened to receive the august prisoner. Nothing had escaped the cruel wish of Ormea to make it clear to Victor Amadeus that he was a prisoner and that a prisoner he would remain. He was at once put under the charge of four officers, who were charged never to leave him ; one slept on the threshold of his room and another in an adjoining apartment. If Victor Amadeus ever requested a few minutes' privacy, one or other of the officers listened at the door to the conversation that passed between the prisoner and his servants, who were charged to speak loud enough to be heard. All the stairs save the one leading to King Victor's room

were walled up, likewise the doors, so that the only means of entrance to his room was by the one door and the one flight of stairs. When he took a few steps on a little terrace, he was always followed by some guards, and the strict supervision was never relaxed for a single moment. His confessor, the Abbé Dormiglia, was sent to celebrate daily Mass, during which time the Cavaliere Solaro with two of the officers invariably searched King Victor's room, a process that was repeated every evening before he retired for the night. It would be a long tale, and one unnecessarily painful, to relate all the measures employed with the cruel purpose of insulting the Sovereign and of making him suffer humiliation in the most insignificant details, even denying him pen, ink, and paper.

The first few days following the incarceration of Victor Amadeus were terrible alike to himself and to any who approached him. His vehemence was so uncontrolled that it was believed his mind would give way. It is said that in an access of rage he split a marble table with his fist, and that not till worn out by physical exhaustion did his fury abate, changing to almost childish imbecility, while he prayed and cried incessantly that the Marchesa should come to him.

No news was given the unhappy prisoner of his wife. Whenever he made inquiries regarding her, he was told that she was in a convent. It was as well that he should be unable to gain the information he longed for, as he was spared the pain of knowing

that the Marchesa had been taken to a house of correction at Ceva, about fifty miles from Turin.

Month after month passed and there were no signs of any modification of the rigid rules enforced over Victor Amadeus. His repeated request that his son should come and see him was unattended to, notwithstanding the old monarch's assurances that the King need not fear any reproaches ; he only wished to embrace him and give him his blessing. It is more than probable that these messages were never delivered, or, if they were, Ormea had gained such complete ascendancy over the pitifully weak Sovereign that he had no trouble in preventing any reconciliation between father and son.

The life at Court had resumed its former animation — balls, receptions, excursions succeeded each other in breathless pursuit, and, absolutely indifferent to his suffering parent, the King, every time he went stag-hunting, passed under the windows of Rivoli, neither giving them a glance, nor pausing in the chase to bestow a thought on his prisoner within the walls.

In that year, 1731, the consecration of the Superga took place with great solemnity and magnificence. The hero whose brave deeds had originated the building of the superb monument was forgotten in the excitement of the ceremony, and, unconcerned at the tragedy taking place in their town, the people in gala costume thronged the hillside.

This indifference to the fate of a man who had



Photo, G. Brogi

THE SUPERGA, TURIN

merited very different treatment, conveyed a most appalling impression in other countries, and the subdued murmurs at the cowardly arrest turned to open condemnation at the inhuman treatment of a Sovereign who had justly been esteemed as one of the most remarkable of his day.

Charles Emmanuel saw the trend of public opinion, and felt the disrepute growing round his name, which became more loudly expressed owing to serious reports concerning King Victor's health. The fear that disagreeable results might accrue with the other Courts of Europe alone determined him to decide with his ministers that Victor Amadeus should be removed to Moncalieri, which, situated on a height with a few acres of ground, would enable him to take exercise, of which he stood greatly in need. The removal of the captive took place after the same precautions as those observed at Rivoli had been adopted. The park walls and fences were heightened and strengthened, as if a wild animal were in the enclosure, and no relaxation was made in King Victor's life till the Marchesa di Spigno was restored to him April 12th, 1732 ; but before being allowed to leave the ignoble place where she had been shamefully confined, very hard conditions were imposed on her, one of which was, that her life would be only insured by her absolute silence as to her long imprisonment in the fortress of Ceva.

Anxious as Victor Amadeus had been to have the Marchesa with him, they were of little mutual con-

solation to one another. The circumstances connected with their separation had been too brutal and degrading for any comfort to be found in each other's society.

Whilst Victor Amadeus constantly upbraided her with having led to his destruction, as had he not been influenced against Chambéry, he would have lived there in peace and contentment ; the Marchesa, still dwelling on the deception she had suffered concerning her marriage, did not accept King Victor's rebukes with equanimity, and having nothing to distract their thoughts from their sad position, the short time they were together passed in painful recriminations.

In the early part of October the marvellous strength that had enabled Victor Amadeus to bear up under the terrible shocks to which he had been exposed suddenly gave way, and one morning when his valet went to call him he found King Victor lying inert, incapable of uttering a word. The doctors who were called in sent hastily to Turin to acquaint the King that they considered death to be imminent. Charles Emmanuel seemed distressed at this news, and showed some wish to visit his dying father, but this feebly expressed desire was easily overruled by the Queen and Ormea, and whilst he was still hesitating whether to go or not, information arrived that Victor Amadeus had recovered the use of speech and the crisis was over.

During this temporary improvement King Victor asked incessantly after his son, his daughter-in-law,

and the grandchildren. All the passion and selfwill had passed out of his nature, and those who attended him felt the pathos of the absolute resignation shown by a man who had been so remarkable for his excessive vitality. During the short interval of return to consciousness he asked pardon for the violence he had displayed, and also said he forgave his son and the Marchese d'Ormea for the sufferings they had caused him.

The recovered faculty of speech was but of short duration, he had a second attack of paralysis, and soon after the last hours' agony commenced. In spite of all the touching messages of affection and forgiveness, Charles Emmanuel, to his lasting shame, even at the moment that death was slowly approaching, still kept away from his father, who if not free from blame had obtained for him the position he enjoyed, and by a laborious life had left a glorious harvest to add to Charles Emmanuel's store.

Round the death-bed the prayers of the Cappuccini were only interrupted by the sobs of the Marchesa. The hours slowly went by, death was visible on the monarch's face, and just before he breathed his last breath, one of the Cappuccini held up the crucifix to his lips, imploring him as a sign of pardon to all who had offended him, to kiss it, which he did most fervently; another sigh, the troubled spirit was at rest, and on October 31st, 1732, the soul of the great King was beyond the recall of those who had abandoned him in his last hours.

No sooner had Cavaliere Solaro satisfied himself that Victor Amadeus was *in extremis* than he sent to Turin for orders. Ormea replied that without delay all the palisades and walls enclosing the park were to be cleared away, and the iron bars of the windows removed, so that on the arrival of the Court not a trace of the barricades serving for the imprisonment of the hero should be seen.

The following day the Marchese del Borgo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Attorney to the Crown, went to Moncalieri with a numerous suite to attest the death of Victor Amadeus. The Sovereign, whose entreaties for mercy had been unheeded during the last miserable months of his life, was accorded funeral honours of unusual pomp in the Cathedral of Turin. From thence he was transported to the Superga, and deposited in the little Chapel of the Vergine delle Grazie, a humble but commemorative resting-place, until the year 1778, when, under the reign of Victor Amadeus III., the vault was finished and the mausoleum inaugurated by Victor Amadeus II. completed.

The morning after King Victor's death the Marchesa di Spigno was forcibly removed, and was taken to the Monastery of S. Giuseppe di Carignano, but at her request her compulsory imprisonment by order of the King, was allowed to be transferred to the Monastery of the Salesiane of Pinerolo, situated on the slopes of the hill overlooking the valley of San Maurizio, where she had relatives of her own. After thirty-eight years passed in this monastery, she died

April 11th, 1769, the anniversary of her birthday, at the advanced age of ninety.

Her body, dressed in the garb of the Order, was exposed, according to the custom of the monastery, on a catafalque in the nave of the church. It was then placed in a coffin, and it was consigned to the vault without an inscription of any kind, according to her wishes. Only by tradition was the memory of the wife of Victor Amadeus handed down from one sister to another.

There is much to regret in the closing scenes of King Victor's reign, and equal blame must be attached to both father and son for a catastrophe which the dignity proper to the illustrious House should have rendered impossible. Charles Emmanuel had never forgotten the grudge he had borne his father in the days of his youth, the tyranny to which he had been forced to submit was branded on his soul ; and though it is impossible to condone the actions that drew opprobrium on Charles Emmanuel, his undutiful behaviour was as much due to his fear of Victor Amadeus as to Ormea's baneful influence.

It was not only the King but the Marchesa di Spigno and Queen Polixena, who, though swayed by very different motives, both contributed to the catastrophe. Without any kind of complicity they largely exerted their influence antagonistic to King Victor, and stimulated by the desire to carry out their designs, each followed a line of her own, until these lines converged at the moment fatal to Victor Amadeus. Queen

Polixena had her reasons for resentment against her father-in-law, and besides sharing with Ormea in the grave responsibility of alienating Charles Emmanuel from his father, she also concealed from him the cruel and ignominious treatment to which Victor Amadeus was subjected. The Queen had never forgotten the pain she had suffered by the constant separations from her husband during the early years of her marriage, owing to the persistent efforts of Victor Amadeus to keep them parted from each other. On those occasions she had learnt to her cost how incapable Charles Emmanuel was of resisting any command given by his father, however unreasonable it might be, and she trembled as to what might be the results should he agree to the interviews demanded by King Victor at such a critical moment when their destinies hung in the balance. This long-standing aversion to King Victor had not been modified by recent events, and highly indignant at the personal incivilities he had shown her, the Queen had foregathered with Ormea in his work of vengeance, and acted in concert with him to obtain her father-in-law's arrest. In addition to this vindictive feeling harboured against Victor Amadeus, she resented the incessant anxiety felt by Charles Emmanuel on the prolonged crisis. The whole Court was in a state of feverish expectancy, not knowing what new complication might next arise.

To some extent sympathy may be felt for Queen Polixena's fears, and allowance may also be granted for the general state of agitation and serious appre-

hensions by which everyone was affected; but no justification can mitigate the utter absence of heart shown by the Queen in thus becoming a partner to the indignities and vexations that made the closing moments of King Victor's life unbearable.

A letter full of subterfuges, written by the Queen to the Princess of Nassau on the subject, is an example of the anxiety she betrayed to assure the Princess and others how deeply concerned she and Charles Emmanuel were for King's Victor's welfare, and in the following words, dated November 6th, a few weeks after the Sovereign's arrest, she gave her version of a situation that was exciting universal indignation.

"I have lately been kept in perpetual anxiety owing to the health of my dear husband, the King. He has greatly suffered in consequence of these sad events and the resolution he found himself compelled to take. Such a resolution cost more to him than to any other, as he has such a good heart! During his attacks of illness, King Victor often forgot what had taken place. His mental capacities were greatly weakened, which was a cause for further anxiety, and the lady (the Marchesa di Spigno), instead of calming him and trying to impress on him the necessity of attending to his health, acting from ill-advised ambition, only irritated him the more. Now we are quiet, and have passed this last month at the Veneria. King Victor is living at Rivoli, his favourite country-place! He is very

well, and has in his suite all those chosen by him at the time of his abdication ! Your letters prove to me that this occurrence has led to his condition being a great deal discussed ; up to the time that we took the deliberation of assuring ourselves of King Victor and the lady, who is now in a fortress, we, like everyone else, were in a state of grave suspense. Absolute repose now reigns, and we also are quite happy.”¹

No one was deceived by these efforts of justification on the part of the King and Queen, and the ability they displayed to prove extenuating circumstances did not detract from their condemnation.

Sufficient stress has been laid in this work on the remarkably sharp contrasts of King Victor's character. Side by side with the fiery nature, unyielding to any counsel, impatient of all restraint, was the self-contained, reserved man, entirely absorbed on gaining his will, no matter how long or arduous the striving for it might be. If, on the one hand, his harsh, unsympathetic nature bred enemies, on the other a certain kindliness of disposition that came to the surface when least expected won him many hearts. This capacity for consideration towards others would have been developed to a far greater extent had it not been checked by his suspicious nature, which caused him to draw back if he thought he was giving a mark of weakness, and so might lose the authority he loved to assert.

¹ *Vittorio Amedeo II.*, p. 414, E. Parri. Hoepli, Milano, 1888.

The calamities that threw a shadow over the last months of his life may partially be explained by his health. Successive attacks of paralysis had weakened his mental capacities, and the irritability arising from the strokes produced paroxysms of mad excitement, of the full force of which he was himself unaware. The patient, loving Queen Anna was no longer near him to allay the feverish fits of temper, or to induce calm by a judicious word when he would obstinately cling to an opinion that he well knew was impracticable, but on which he would work himself up into a frenzy chiefly to annoy others and from a spirit of contradiction.

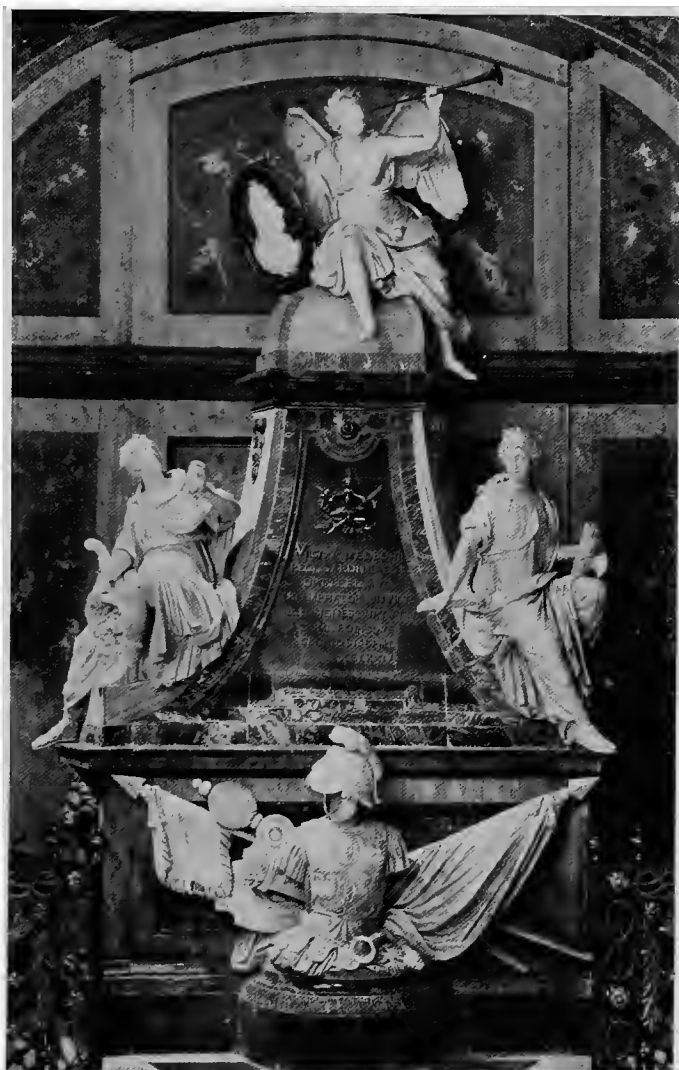
The disasters following so closely on his second marriage brought home to him how ill-judged he had been in his choice, and as the gloom of the gathering clouds grew ever darker and heavier, the selfish ambitions of his worthless companion was a greater blow to his pride than to any feelings of sentiment.

The name of Victor 'Amadeus II. will be handed to posterity as that of a man of many powers.

It is rarely given in one short lifetime to see such results as he reaped for his country. From a subservient State he raised Savoy to a position worthy of the consideration and respect of all other countries. By conscientious determination he brought her safely through all the tribulation caused her by France, and, finally, by his personal prestige, obtained for Savoy the status of a kingdom. Besides the great name he

made for himself as a military commander, all historians agree that he was almost more remarkable in the capacity of administrator and political economist. When he succeeded to the ducal throne, the revenues of Piedmont were seven million lira ; on his death, owing to the severe economy practised by the King in his personal expenses and the utility to which he turned the money received by the State, the revenue was more than doubled. He was unfailing in his efforts to inspire the people with a love of work, for which they had an aversion, and by his own example he generally led them to apply themselves with energy and perseverance to business and labour. No trifle was too insignificant to pass the King's close observation. At one time it was the quality of the cloth used for his soldiers' uniforms that occupied all his thoughts, and having calculated that ordering cloth from France caused a great deal of expense, he combined for the establishment at Biella and Mondovi of some rich French manufacturers, who soon produced every quality of cloth required at a greatly reduced outlay. The same system was carried out with silk manufactories, which were also instituted by him. Having learnt in 1718 from a Venetian monk the secret of manufacturing tobacco, he surrendered two of his country seats for the cultivation of this crop, in which attempt he was very successful.

Though not naturally endowed with a great knowledge of, or love for, arts and sciences, it did not



Photo, G. Brogi

THE MONUMENT TO VICTOR AMADEUS II. IN THE MAUSOLEUM
OF THE SUPERGA

Facing p. 556

hinder his strong wish to improve the taste and elevate the standard in various branches of learning. He built the University of Turin, and in order to make those reforms he considered necessary for the benefit of students, he appointed the most capable professors from France, Flanders, and from those towns of Italy bearing the reputation of exceptional qualifications for instruction.

In addition to the stupendous work of the Superga, the principal labour of which fell to his share, he erected the churches of San Filippo Neri and that at the Veneria, reconstructed the façade of the Prince of Piedmont's palace, and occupied himself with the State Archives.

In 1727 he obtained the Pope's concession to the nomination of the livings in Piedmont. This had been a dispute of long standing, and in many other instances he was granted pontifical privileges that had been denied to his predecessors.

He was a Sovereign who could ill be spared. Of no great age—for when he died he was only sixty-six—still every moment of his life had been spent, and the work he imposed on himself had been sufficiently hard to undermine a naturally delicate constitution, without taking into account the exhaustive efforts of a self-tormenting nature, which could never abide any opposition or advice, and seemed perpetually at enmity towards himself and others.

“JE. ATANS. MÔ. ANSTRE” (*J'attends mon astre*) was the motto of the Conte Verde (Amedeo VI.), that

dictated his aspirations to the doing of brave deeds. This device of the warrior of old has rung in the ears of all the Princes of his House. With their gaze always fixed on the distant star invoked by their ancestor, their long roll of heroic deeds testifies to their unflinching zeal to attain the highest good. The star of Italy is now in the ascendancy, and will shine with ever-increasing brilliancy as long as the Princes of Savoy are always ready to unfurl their banner in defence of their own and their country's honour.

APPENDIX A

AMONG the many signal acts of heroism during the long and trying siege of Turin, the self-sought death of Pietro Micca, a soldier from the village of Andorno, will be handed down to perpetuity. The enemy were on the point of entering the town by a breach in the wall in the immediate vicinity of a mine. Peril was imminent; there was no time to light the fusee and to retire to safety; but without a moment's deliberation Pietro, after having begged a comrade to recommend his wife and children to the Duke's mercy, set fire to the powder, and amidst a terrific explosion was hurled several feet in the air, and buried with a detachment of the enemy's troops amongst the débris and ruins.

APPENDIX B

THE eagle of Savoy is black on a gold field. Though not used on State seals, it is always adopted by the royal family of Savoy, and recently, by command of the present King, is employed on coins and stamps.

The eagle displayed bears on its breast a small red shield with the white cross of Savoy.

The eagle is the badge of the Holy Roman Empire, and was conferred on the Counts of Savoy. The white cross on the red shield is the emblem of San Giovanni the Protector of Piedmont, and symbolises the sovereignty of that State.

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